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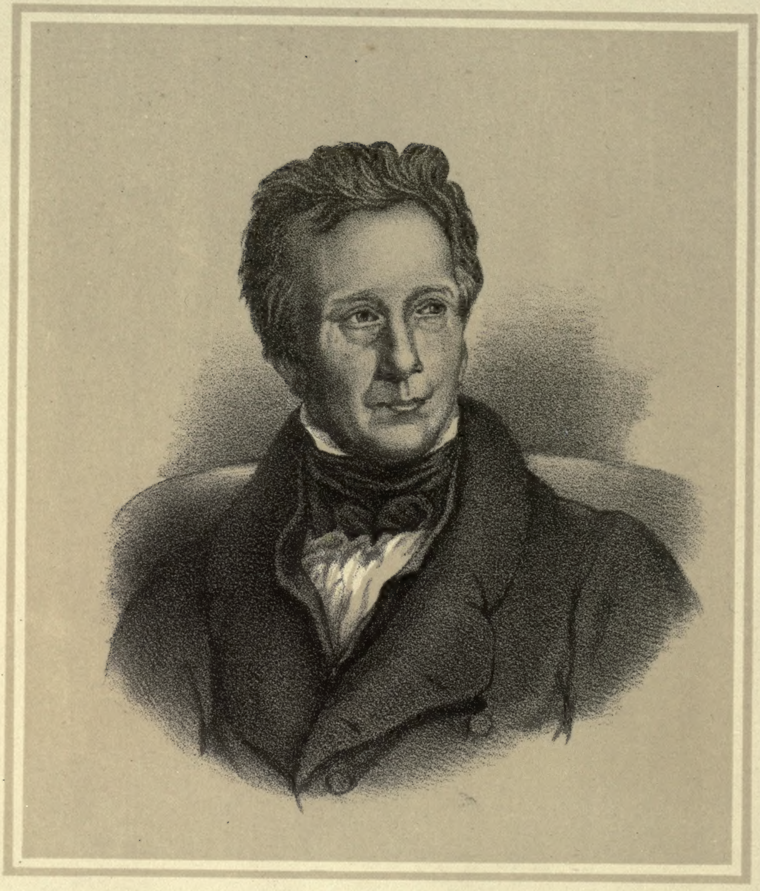
MEMORIALS OF JAMES HOGG.



SCOTT & FERGUSON, EDINA.

Your most affectionate
James Hogg

MEMORIALS

OF

JAMES HOGG,

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.

EDITED BY HIS DAUGHTER,

MRS. GARDEN.

WITH PREFACE BY

PROFESSOR VEITCH.

ALEXANDER GARDNER,
PAISLEY; AND 12 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

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PREFACE.

THIS volume—a tribute from a daughter to the memory of her father—does not profess to be more than, as its title suggests, "Memorials" of JAMES HOGG, the Shepherd Poet of Ettrick. It may serve, however, from the directness and authenticity of the materials—especially the letters of HOGG himself—to shed a truer light on the man, his character, and his life, than has yet been done. Circumstances have been unfavourable to our having a true picture of the man. It was the fate of HOGG to have his name associated with certain representations in the well-known and once universally read "Noctes" of *Blackwood's Magazine.* Whatever be the merits of the picture of the Shepherd therein delineated—and no one will deny its power and genius—it is true, all the same, that this Shepherd was not the Shepherd of Ettrick, or the man JAMES HOGG. He was neither a Socrates nor a Falstaff—

neither to be credited with the wisdom and lofty idealisings of the one, nor with the characteristic humour and coarseness of the other. Nor are the habitual bombast and boasting with which the Shepherd of the "Noctes" is endowed to be regarded as serious characteristics of the man.

In these Memorials it will, I think, appear that JAMES HOGG was very much what we might expect from his robust peasant ancestry, and the shaping circumstances of his early life and surroundings. Physically, he was a healthy man all round, knew nothing of the ailments of sedentary or dyspeptic authors, had an unfailing flow of animal spirits, loved all out-door life—walking, fishing, shooting, curling. This temperament and these habits helped him more than anything else, to bear up during a chequered life, under the pressure of adverse circumstances, which would have sunk most men in despair.

His poetic faculty and imaginative creations were almost as thoroughly the growth of the district and circumstances in which he was born and bred, as the birk by the burn or the bracken in the glen. The green pastoral solitudes of Ettrick moulded his feelings and fancy from the earliest days of his life; and the whole district of the Ettrick and the Yarrow,—the main part of the Forest of the Stuart kings,—carried his imagination back into the past, as to an ideal world; while in all the glens of the waters and the burns there were men and women living who could touch the heart of the eager listening stripling lad, with recitation and notes of an old ballad lore,—the quaintest, the richest, the most unique which Britain has known. Weird tale, ghostly legend, fairy visitations,—mysterious disappearances of maidens in the green wood shaw, and shepherds spirited away on the hills,—these were in the atmosphere which he breathed, still believed in by many, and a source of awe and wonder to all. The supernatural world was in his youth close to the natural—often flashing upon it; and it was thus that the Ettrick Shepherd came gradually to weave into one beautiful, weird, and dreamy ideal, the actual scenes of the valleys he loved so well, with the world of fairy vision.

The traits of HOGG's personal character, further, reflect very much his birth and surroundings. He was a man of simple, kindly heart, and straightforward purpose,—"aefauld," as he might be described, ready to trust, shrewd and sagacious withal, not prone to think or speak evil of any one, inclined to admiration rather than to censure, but with a proud scorn of meanness and baseness of conduct. As was to be expected, his manners had a certain rusticity and homeliness. He is said sometimes to have carried a little too far the privileges of an innocent rusticity in the violation of matters of social etiquette ; but we see clearly, from the testimonies in this volume of those who met him in society, that he was, especially towards the middle and close of his life, neither rude nor loutish, but marked by a good deal of simple dignity. His ruling ambition in life, from the hour when the quaint, clever, half-daft, wandering Jock Scott, recited to him, shortly after the death of Burns, *Tam o' Shanter* on the hill-side in the Blackhouse Glen, was to be known as a poet, as, in fact, like Burns, a national poet, and, in his then untutored mood of mind, he had even formed the idea of emulating

Burns himself. In this kind of disposition lay Hogg's strength and his weakness. He had a profound belief in himself and his powers,—a large share of egotism. His vanity was in no way concealed; he wore it on his sleeve, and it was a source of some amusement to his friends. But the consciousness under it all of a latent struggling power of genius was that which kept the heart in him to face difficulties of social position, and defects of education, which few men in Scotland, or indeed in the world of letters, have had the courage to battle with and the force to overcome. The conviction was somehow in him from the first that he could achieve a place among the poets of his native land, and, while this feeling sustained him, it proved in the end to be well founded. His poetic faculty was his one title to distinction; and we need not be surprised that he was proud of it, or that he was touched to the quick by any disparagement of his powers. As he once said to Scott, who had given him some no doubt kindly and candid criticism—"Ane's beuks are like his bairns: he disna like to hear them spoken ill o', especially when he is conscious that they dinna deserve it." On another occasion he ventured to say to Sir Walter—"Dear Sir Walter! Ye can never suppose that I belang to your School o' Chivalry! Ye are the king o' that school, but I'm the king o' the Mountain and Fairy School, which is a far higher ane nor yours." This, put with an almost sublime egotism, is in the main true. The SHEPHERD was a master in the Fairy fiction of Scotland, and he attained a delicacy and perfection of touch in that department which, while they recall the finest of the old fairy ballads, are wholly his own. HOGG'S sensitiveness on the point of his poetical genius was shown on more than one occasion in his relations not only with his warmly-attached friend, Sir Walter Scott, but with others, especially in the instance of Wordsworth's reported slighting speech about the trio of poets. But it does not appear that his resentment was either deep or long-continued, though he speaks of never being able to forgive Wordsworth. HOGG was essentially a kindly, generous, and warm-affectioned man, capable of attaching to himself friends of very opposite characters; genial in society, though not a copious or brilliant talker, and, in his own home at Eltrive and Mount Benger, hospitable almost to a fault. Obviously, too, he was a loving and well-loved man in his home circle, where he found his best happiness. His shrewd views of people and things, and his quaint modes of expression, redolent of the vernacular of the Forest and tinged with poetry,—in a word, the singular individuality of his character made him an object of interest to numerous friends and acquaintances all over Britain.

What Mr. Robert Chambers said of him is the truth :—

"While thus recalling for the amusement of an idle hour, some of the whimsical scenes in which we have met James Hogg, let it not be supposed that we think of him only with a regard to his homely manners, the social good nature, and the unimportant foibles by which he was characterised. The world amidst which he moved was but too apt, especially of late years, to regard him in those lights alone, forgetting that beneath the rustic plaid there beat one of the kindest and most unperverted of hearts, while his bonnet covered the head from which had sprung 'Kilmeny' and 'Donald Mac-

Donald.' Hogg, as an untutored man, was a prodigy, much more so than Burns, who had comparatively a good education; and now that he is dead and gone, we look around in vain for a living hand capable of waking the national lyre. The time will probably come when the inspired rustic will be more fully appreciated."

The letters in this volume of Mr. J. G. Lockhart to Hogg are of considerable interest. They show that Lockhart had for Hogg in his lifetime a real regard and esteem. They are of the most friendly nature; and yet we know that after Hogg's death, Lockhart, in his *Life of Scott,* speaks of Hogg in the most sharp, bitter, even denunciatory terms. The direct ground of this was, no doubt, a publication of Hogg, entitled, *The Domestic Manners and Private Life of Sir Walter Scott.* This appeared after Scott's death. A careful perusal of it shows that in writing his reminiscences of Scott, Hogg was actuated by no motive of hostility or desire to disparage the memory of his friend. On the contrary, the whole feeling which runs through the pamphlet is one of affection, and almost worship, for the great man who noticed and befriended him. There are certain things which might have been omitted—coarse gossip and injudicious inferences;—and HOGG's sensitive vanity leads him occasionally to see and to feel a meaning in his friend's utterances and dealings with him which probably had no reality. Still, the tract, taken as a whole, affords no reasonable ground for Lockhart's attack on HOGG, and his general animadversions on his character and manners. It would almost seem that some of HOGG's plain-spoken truths regarding certain foibles in the character of Scott—after all, only spots on the sun—had come home to Lockhart's own sense of truth, and made him unreasonably angry. It was to Lockhart disgusting even to find HOGG offering criticism on Scott at all. The truth is, that Lockhart, in his own line, was as narrow as the Shepherd was in his. Lockhart, like some of his other Edinburgh contemporaries, could not understand that any man was a gentleman, who had not been born conventionally into the guild; while it sometimes happens that the conventional personage with the outward veneering, is not at heart so true a gentleman as the simple peasant or shepherd of the hills.

The volume is of interest, further, as giving us well-authenticated dates and details of HOGG's life, especially his early years, and the influences which helped to form his character and develop his genius.

One of his most marked characteristics is that of an intense love for free and simple nature; and that grew up in him amid the scenes of his youth.

> "The Bard on Ettrick's mountains green,
> In Nature's bosom nursed had been,
> And oft had marked in forest lone
> Her beauties on her mountain throne;
> Had seen her deck the wild wood tree,
> And star with snowy gems the lea;
> In loveliest colours paint the plain,
> And sow the moor with purple grain;
> By golden mead and mountain sheer
> Had viewed the Ettrick waving clear,
> Where shadowy flocks of purest snow
> Seemed grazing in a world below.
> Oft had he viewed, as morning rose,
> The bosom of the lonely Lowes,
> Ploughed far by many a downy keel
> Of wild duck and of vagrant teal.
> Oft thrilled the heart at close of even,
> To see the dappled vales of Heaven,
> With many a mountain, moor, and tree,
> Asleep upon the St. Mary."

But apart from his native Ettrick, he was singularly fortunate, as a youth with a soul in him, in the localities of his herding. In his sixteenth year he went to Willanslee, in Leithen Water, with a kindly master, Mr. Laidlaw. Willanslee is a charming spot for a lover of nature. It is lonely and secluded, placed at the base of high, wide-spreading, massive hills that carry the greenest of sward up to the sky-line, and fronting it are heights that grow purple in autumn with the richest heather-bloom. There is a constant sound of burns, which, coming from north and south, fuse with the Leithen Water in the valley by the old and quaint farmhouse. Here it was, amid blissful surroundings, that the shepherd boy and his collie for two years herded the sheep through the long summer day, and here it was that he first read *The Gentle Shepherd* and was touched by the romance of the *Exploits of William Wallace.* Slowly, unconsciously, the latent soul of poesy was gathering strength and harmony within, which must issue in rhyme, if only for the freedom of relief.

From Willanslee he passed to Blackhouse, on the Yarrow. As I have had occasion to remark, referring to HOGG, in another publication, the spring-time of his genius was no doubt the ten years from

1790 to 1800, when he herded at Blackhouse in the Douglas Burn, and had the advantage of the kindly sympathy, aid, and advice of his master's son, William Laidlaw, one who has left all too little for the lovers of simple pathos and the well-wishers of the Scottish muse. I like to picture HOGG at this period as he herded on the Hawkshaw Rig, up the Douglas Burn, a dark heathery slope of the Blackhouse Heights, which divides the Blackhope Burn from the other main feeders of the Douglas. There on a summer day, during these ten years, you would find on the hill a ruddy-faced youth of middle height, of finely symmetrical and agile form, with beaming light blue eyes, and a profusion of light brown hair that fell over his shoulders, long, fair, and lissome as a woman's. The time is between the middle of July and the middle of September, when his duty is to "summer the lambs."

These had simply to be moved from place to place, and this was done by "Hector" or his successor—the shepherd's collie and friend. Now was the opportunity of the shepherd-student. With the lambs quietly pasturing, he sets to work, produces a sheet or two of paper folded and stitched, has an inkhorn stuck in the hole of his waistcoat with a cork and a bit of twine, and a stump of a pen, and there he thinks out his verses—writes them, in fact, all through on the tablet of memory, and then commits the production which he has already finished and polished in his mind to paper. What kind of poetic impulse and cast of genius was likely to come out of this? Let us look on the surroundings. It is a lone wild scene, this Hawkshaw Rig. The grains of the burn spread out on each side, like arms stretched upwards, to the dark overhanging and environing heights of Blackhouse, scored deep with peat-bogs, and suggestive of wild work of the winter wind and the winter night. These heights shut him in on the north and west, while on the east the benty moorland opens and widens to the head of the watershed of the Quair. There, on this moorland, at the head of the Rispsyke, are the eleven stones—three erect, eight fallen—which mark the scene of the Douglas Tragedy. Below, in the valley of the Burn, as it sweeps to the Yarrow, is Blackhouse Tower, carrying the thought back along the chequered flow of Scottish story to the early kings, when from that tower, or one on its site, the lord of Douglas Burn rode to a Parliament of Malcolm Canmore. Awe and solitude, legendary tale, and the shadows of old memories are all round about him. But there is also a sweet strange beauty, for the heather is in bloom, and there are numberless gentle birks down in the cleughs, and green spots of rare grassy beauty by the burnsides, and the many branched feeders of the burn themselves make a soft, pulsing, intermittent sough and hum, that charms the ear and inclines the soul to tenderness and pathos, and all gentle thoughts and feelings. It is as if soft beauty of sight and sound lay quiet at the heart of solitude and fear. Now it was here in those long summer days, that extend from morn till gloamin', and amid similar scenes in Ettrick and in Yarrow, that this simple, untaught, yet impassioned shepherd lad, with his heart full of the lore his mother, and grey-haired men had taught him, developed the peculiar cast of his poetic genius. It was thus he learned to love simple, free, solitary nature so intensely; it was thus that his heart soared with, and yearned after, the skylark of a morning, and swelled into lyric passion of an evening "when the kye comes hame;" it was thus he learned to conceive those exquisite visions of Fairy and Fairyland which he has embodied in *Kilmeny*, to feel and express the power of the awful and weird in a way such as almost no modern poet has expressed them, as in the "Fate of MacGregor," "The Abbot MacKinnon," "The Witch of Fife," and others; to revel, in a word, in a remote, ideal, super-sensible, yet most ethereal beauty and grandeur, which has a spell we do not seek to analyse.*

HOGG's prose tales seem to me to be as a rule very inferior to the best of his poetry. In them he deals often powerfully enough with the element of supernatural belief and agency—ghost and fairy. But the plots are seldom well constructed, and there is often a lack of proportion and congruity in the parts. As Scott said to him more than once, "How much better could it be made with a little more pains." *The Brownie of Bodsbeck, The Bridal of Polmood,* and several others, will, at the same time, continue to touch us with a weird charm. HOGG was a true idealist. He was more at home among fairies than folk of middle erd.

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* "Border History and Poetry," p. 488, *et seq.*

The first meeting with Scott in the cottage at Ettrickhall, in the summer of 1801, when the future author of *The Lay* was gathering the old Ballads and laying up his stores of romance, is very interesting. And the picture of the Shepherd's mother, and her sayings to Scott, are thoroughly characteristic of the intelligent Scottish peasant woman of the time. When she said the old Ballads were for singing, not for writing, she was right; and when she predicted that these Ballads, after Scott had printed them, would cease to be sung in the peasant and rural homes of Scotland, she was sagaciously and prophetically true.

HOGG's last interview with Scott (1830) was in Yarrow, at the Gordon Arms, near the house of Mount Benger. Scott had sent him word that he was to pass down the Yarrow from Drumlanrig, on his way to Abbotsford. The carriage stopped at the small inn—the Gordon Arms—and there the Shepherd met Sir Walter. They walked down the road past Mount Benger, Sir Walter leaning heavily on HOGG's arm, and walking very feebly. The Shepherd noticed the change, bodily and mental, in the great man whom he honoured, almost worshipped. There was some talk, not of a very clear kind, but kindly and affectionate. It was exactly twenty-nine years before, that HOGG, a young man, had met Scott in his mother's cottage at Ettrick Hall, when the editor of the *Minstrelsy* was sowing the seed that had ripened during those intervening years into that glorious golden harvest of poem and romance—as rich an outcome of one man's lifetime as the world has ever seen. Here, appropriately enough, in beloved Yarrow—dear to HOGG, and dearest vale on earth to Scott—the two poets whom Yarrow itself had quickened and nourished, parted for the last time on earth. One cannot help feeling that this touching incident gives a new interest to the spot in the vale where they met and parted, and adds another to the many sacred associations that cluster round the name of Yarrow.

Hogg's life nearly all through was a struggle with adverse circumstances, relieved now and again by a glint of good fortune. But just when he thought he was within sight of the realisation of one main ambition of his life,—to become a tenant farmer,—his struggle rose really to the hardest. Mount Benger was over-rented, seasons were bad, and prices low, and to keep this farm swallowed up all the gains of his literary labours,—constant as these were. Then came the bankruptcies of publishers whom in his simplicity he had trusted; and no author ever suffered more from this source than Hogg. Still the spirit and pluck of the man remained undaunted; and he worked on, contributing to periodicals, writing tales and sketches, with a quiet heroism and patience which are very touching. At length, towards 1835, came the symptons of failing strength and of the end. The conviction of the coming close to all his work was in his heart. But he would see Blackhouse and the Douglas Burn, which from 1790 to 1800 witnessed and nourished the first promise of his powers. There he had lain on the hillside, as a lad with the fervour of his genius stirring in him. And now he came back to the spot associated with his early dreams and hopes, after the promise had so far been realised in his life, though probably by no means to his own satisfaction, for to a man of idealising temperament all achievement is poor and passing. He rode, accompanied by his young boy, a sympathetic lad, up the old path by the Tower, up the burn, and up the glen to the right as far as the Risp Dyke and the Douglas Stones; then on to the solitary moorland height of the watershed of the Quair. He took a long lingering look of the spot and its surrounding hills, massive, dark browed, and scaured, and then rode slowly back to Eltrive, never to see Blackhouse again. In November of the same year, he was laid beside his shepherd forebears in the green kirkyard of Ettrick. The shadow of Ettrick Pen can be seen to the south-west, and the Ettrick and the Tima join their waters not far from his grave—a grave which contains the ashes of one who, after Burns, was "the greatest poet that has sprung from the bosom of the common people" of Scotland.

J. V.

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CORRIGENDA.

Page 28, line 5, for *was* read *were.*
Page 29, line 10, for *1830* read *1800.*
Page 40, line 5, for *with* read *having.*
Page 44, line 22, for *Hack* read *Slack.*
Page 193, line 3, for *moorland* read *moorlands.*
Page 333, line 2, for *mentor* read *master.*

MEMORIALS.

CHAPTER I.

1770-1790.

"ETTRICK FOREST" is the ancient and poetic name for the county of Selkirk. Lovely in its solitude, the "Forest" has a beauty of its own. Within the "Forest Kirk" Sir William Wallace was chosen as the guardian of Scotland. Sir Walter Scott was well known and much loved as Sheriff of Selkirkshire; and in a cottage by the way-side, near the Parish Church of Ettrick, was born James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, who thus first saw the light on what we may regard as classic ground. "The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away," but there still remain, "firm and sure," the grand swelling hills the poet loved so well. Wood and water, and the lofty green hills, with ever, as it appears to the onlooker, another hill above and beyond, the "Forest" of which Hogg sung and over which the author of "Waverley" was Sheriff, is a district worthy of admiration alike by the poet and the traveller.

To Robert Hogg and Margaret Laidlaw were born four sons. James Hogg, "the Ettrick Shepherd," was their second son. He was born in the cottage at Ettrick Hall, most likely, as we think, towards the end of the year 1770, but some little obscurity seems to hang round the exact date of James Hogg's birth. Hogg himself supposed his birthday to have been the 25th of January, 1772, although why he did so it is quite impossible to explain, but the idea—a mistaken one as we think—had undoubtedly got hold of him, and to the end of his days he remained under this illusion. Writing to his brother poet, Robert Gilfillan, so late as 25th January, 1834, he says—"as this is the sixty-fourth anniversary of my birth, you need not expect to get much more from the old shepherd."

In an article on "The Lights of Maga," a late writer in *Blackwood* says that there is little lack of charity in assuming that Hogg altered the day of his birth purposely that it might coincide with that of Burns, priding himself upon this coincidence. Charity is not the only grace awanting in a writer who can assume this, stating, at the same time, that the matter is in black and white in the parish register, which gives the date of December, 1770. The parish register does not give the date of his birth. These old parish registers were registers of baptisms and not of births, the latter being only mentioned incidentally, if at all. In the case in point, the register of the parish of Ettrick gives the 9th of December, 1770, as the date of James Hogg's baptism, but is altogether silent as to the date of his birth.

After [illegible]

It would have been entirely foreign to the character of the man, whose special characteristics were openness and simplicity, to have done as this writer suggests. This, indeed, would have been an act of self-depreciation, which few were less likely to commit than Hogg, who was the very man to claim a birthday all to himself. As his parents were religious people, and their dwelling almost adjoined the parish Kirk, it is very unlikely that the sacred rite of baptism would be longer postponed than the state of the mother's health rendered absolutely necessary. Consequently, we may fix the date of his birth towards the end of the year 1770, not unlikely the 25th of November of that year. This would tally with the registered date of his baptism; and to quote from a letter written after Hogg's death, by his life-long friend, Mr. Laidlaw of Bowerhope, we find that gentleman writing—"I was also looking to my paper on the life of J. Hogg. I have said that he was born in the latter end of 1770. This must have been from his mother." While, of course, unable to explain why Hogg supposed his birthday to have been in January, as he unquestionably did, instead of in November, as we think likely, a mistake of this sort would not be altogether foreign to his habits. In the home of the Ettrick Shepherd there happened to be two family Bibles, and, in his own handwriting, Hogg entered the birth of one of his children in *August* in one bible and in *September* in the other. As the correct date, in *August*, coincided with the birthday of the then reigning monarch, Hogg had anything but an inducement to make the alteration. The substitution of the year 1772, as the year of his own birth, instead of 1770, as the parish register suggests, is perhaps strange, but by no means singular, for there are not awanting several instances of the same lack of certainty in other people as to the year of birth.

The homely Scotchwoman, the mother of the Ettrick Shepherd, had herself in no small degree the poetic element, showing itself in a wonderful love of song, as known to her in the ballad lore of the "Forest." Her name was Margaret Laidlaw, and the Laidlaws were well-known in the district as shrewd, clever people. One of them, William Laidlaw, a far-away cousin of the poet's mother, has been made famous by his close connection with Sir Walter Scott and Abbotsford. The great novelist's "Willie Laidlaw," amanuensis, and friend, was himself a poet. He wrote "Lucy's Flitting," a touching ballad, and other songs. He had much of the poetic element in him, but not enough to cause him to strike out for himself a new course.

To the humble, far-away cousin, the herd-boy at Blackhouse, was reserved a full voice of song. How could it be otherwise? The fire of poesy was within him, and it must break forth.

The ancestry of James Hogg was not commonplace. Quite the reverse, because there were witches, wizards, and distinguished local heroes in the catalogue! And although at the time of his birth the family archives presented but a humble record, the Hoggs were yet of ancient lineage. We quote from his own account of his ancestry on the male side—"The author's progenitors possessed the lands of Fauldshope, under the Scotts of Harden,* for ages; my father says, for a period of 400 years, until the extravagance of John Scott occasioned the family to part with these lands. Several of the wives of Fauldshope were reported to be rank witches, and the famous witch of Fauldshope, who so terribly hectored Mr. Michael Scott by turning him into a hare, etc., was one of the Mrs. Hoggs, better known by the name of Lucky Hogg."

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* Now represented by Lord Polwarth.

Then there was William Hogg, better known as the wild boar of Fauldshope. Tradition reports him as of unequalled strength, courage, and ferocity.

> "But the hardy Hoggs of Fauldshope,
> For courage, blood, and bane;
> For the wild boar of Fauldshope,
> Like him was never nane."

Professor Veitch, who has made a study of such subjects, says in page 517 of his delightful work on the History and Poetry of the Borders, "Walter Scott, and James Hogg too, both came from a sheep-farming ancestry. Scott laid claim to gentle blood, and prided himself more on this than he needed to do, and I am not sure but that James Hogg had, in point of fact, as good a claim as he, though his immediate ancestors had fallen lower socially than those of Scott. I say *socially*, for no man falls low, who does not fall below right-doing."

Hogg's mother was Margaret Laidlaw, daughter of the renowned Will of Phaup. And here is the poet's own graphic account of his maternal grandfather—"Will o' Phaup, one of the genuine Laidlaws of Craik, was born at that place in 1691.

He was Shepherd in Phaup for fifty-five years. For feats of frolic, strength, and agility, he had no equal in his day. . . . To record every one of Will's heroic feats would require a volume."

"He was the last man of this wild region who heard, saw and conversed with the fairies, and that not once or twice, but at sundry times and seasons." The last occasion related (believe it whoso list), is as follows—"When Will had become a right old man, and was sitting on a little green hillock at the end of his house one evening, resting himself, there came three little boys up to him, all exactly like one another, when the following short dialogue ensued between Will and them:—

'Goode'en t'ye, Will Laidlaw.'

'Goode'en t'ye, creatures. Whare ir ye gaun this gate?'

'Can ye gie us up-putting for the night?'

'I think three siccan bits o' shreds o' hurchins winna be ill to put up. Where cam ye frae?'

'Frae a place that ye dinna ken. But we are come on a commission to you.'

'Come away in, then, and tak sic cheer as we hae.' Will rose and led the way into the house, and the little boys followed; and as he went, he said carelessly without looking back, 'What's your commission to me, bairns?' He thought they might be the sons of some gentleman, who was the guest of his master.

'We are sent to demand a silver key you have in your possession.'

Will was astounded; and standing still to consider of some old transaction, he said, without lifting his eyes from the ground—'A silver key? In God's name, where came ye from?' There was no answer, on which Will wheeled round, and round, and round; but the tiny beings were all gone, and Will never saw them more. At the name of God they vanished in the twinkling of an eye. It is curious that I never should have heard the secret of the silver key, or indeed whether there was such a thing or not."

So it would appear that the poet of Ettrick had no cause to be ashamed of his forefathers, nor was he, for he rather boasted of his descent from those weird old shepherds. The Hoggs were probably of

Scandinavian blood. Professor Veitch says in page 41 of the before-mentioned work:—

"In the beginning of this century there might have been seen any day on the braes of Yarrow, a shepherd lad with features, hair, and frame of body as like Worsaæ's description of the typical Scandinavian as could well be found. In him, too, there were thrilling ideals, and weird imaginings such as might have moved in the heart of any *Skald;* and he bore a name which might very fairly be regarded as indicating the Norwegian blood; for the Ettrick Shepherd was not named from the *hog* of the hill-side, but from the *haug* or *haig* of the old Northern tongue, as the lairds of Bemerside carried it honourably through the long centuries of Scottish story."

Many remarkable men have owed much to their mother, and Hogg is no exception to this. The mantle of the poet came to him we apprehend from the mother's side. Robert Hogg, the poet's father, was not a man in any way remarkable. A hard-working shepherd, a well-meaning, well-living man, he had saved a little money, and having married, he came to entertain the wish, and to indulge the very natural ambition of becoming a farmer himself. He accordingly took a lease of the farms of Ettrickhouse and Ettrickhall, residing at the time of our poet's birth at the humble homestead of Ettrickhall. Prosperous for a time, success did not continue to follow his footsteps, and Robert Hogg was compelled to relinquish his farms, and to resume the calling of a shepherd. Mr. Bryden of Crosslea took the farm of Ettrickhouse, and until his own death provided Robert Hogg employment as a shepherd, and his family with a home there.

Blackwood, in a recent article to which we before alluded, writes—"Of the men who are the subject of our three articles, 'Wilson, Lockhart, and Hogg,' Hogg was undoubtedly the most remarkable. For his was an untaught and self-educated genius, which shone with rare though fitful lustre in spite of all disadvantages, and surmounted obstacles that were seemingly insuperable." How James Hogg attained to the great position he is acknowledged to have reached, with the all but total want of regular education, and with many surroundings adverse to such an achievement, seems to us to come within measurable distance of the miraculous.

There is little known of his childhood. No one in Ettrick foresaw that the homely, blue-eyed boy running barefoot on the banks of the Ettrick, or the Kirk burn, was destined one day to bring honour to his native dale. No one, therefore, noted his childish sayings and doings. No doubt his mother was busy all day among her bairns and her kye, and had little time for indulging in sentiment. It probably never occurred to her, in the midst of her family cares, that her wee Jamie, with the bright blue eyes, and the constant love of song, was one day to become a great man, and himself a singer of songs, like David the shepherd's son in Bethlehem long ago.

But Margaret Laidlaw was a shrewd woman, and we cannot doubt that the mother's heart soon made the discovery that this boy of hers was a clever child. But what of that? She knew that she was too poor to think of giving him school and college learning, too obscure to think of making him a minister—that being the one grand ambition of the Scottish peasant's heart. To do so was impossible, so the boy got little or no schooling. But he was receiving an education of a different sort, even in his infancy. His elder brother, William, has recorded of him—"He was remarkably fond of hearing stories, and our mother to keep us boys quiet would often tell us tales of kings, giants, knights, fairies, kelpies, brownies, etc., etc. These stories fixed both our eyes and attention, and our mother got forward with her housewifery affairs in a more regular way. She also often repeated to us the metre psalms, and accustomed us to repeat them after her; and I think it was the 122nd which Jamie (for I love the words and names used among us at that day) could have said. I think this was before he knew any of the letters. I am certain before he could spell a word. After he could read with fluency, the historical part of the Bible was his chief delight, and no person whom I have been acquainted with knew it so well. If one entered into conversation on that subject, he could with ease have repeated the names of the several Kings of Israel and Judah in succession, with the names of their kingdoms."

James, with his head full of the lore his mother had taught him, was sent to school for a few months, to learn to read and write; of arithmetic we hear nothing whatever. Probably he never learned "counting," which may help to explain some of his rather rash money transactions in later years. Of his school days his brother says—"He was a quick and ready scholar, not, however, much excelling his schoolfellows in aptitude for learning. He got his lessons very easily, but I am not sure if his memory retained them well."

"The boy is father to the man," here is an instance of the early and the latter spirit. "In the play-ground," continues his brother, "he was every day entering into competitions which gave me uneasiness, as I knew he had no chance with his competitors in racing, wrestling, etc. They were frequently far above his age, and above his strength, yet his frequent defeats did not discourage him."

Poor little one! and yet the germs of poetry and song were in him. Meantime, he was running races with time on the green hillsides of Ettrick. In his autobiography he says—"Even at that early age my fancy seems to have been a hard neighbour for both judgment and memory. I was wont to strip off my clothes and run races against time, or rather against myself; and in the course of these exploits, which I accomplished much to my own admiration, I first lost my plaid, then my bonnet, then my coat, and finally my hosen—for as for shoes I had none. In that naked state did I herd for several days, till a shepherd and maid servant were sent to the hill to look for them, and found them all."

At the end of the summer his parents took him home from his poor little service, and sent him to school again. James advanced so far in learning as to be able to read the Bible. He also tried writing, but with so little success that he tells us every letter was an inch long. He defaced many sheets of paper; but, I suppose, learned only how to form a few of the letters.

This ended his school education; six months, or very little more. That which was to follow was to be of a different kind, and was to be derived from Nature and from his own wonderful application. How otherwise could the poor herd-boy have learned such pure, simple English? The power to do so was not acquired, but God-given. Nature inspired him, and his own diligence taught him how to give utterance to her inspirations. The green hills and pleasant glens of Ettrick, the blue skies and the clouds above him, the roar of the thunder as it echoed from one hill to another, the rushing of the mountain torrents—these were his teachers. He was indulging in wild flights of imagination, and holding converse inwardly with the spirits of his native hills. And he was teaching his awkward hands to write, by forming written characters on the big slate-stones found on the hillsides, while he was herding cows for his master.

It had naturally come to pass, that from herding a few ewes, Hogg had been advanced to be a herd of cows, which was still an employment, however, of the very humblest sort; but the lad's aspirations were towards a shepherd's life, and to that he in due time attained. Meanwhile, as Hogg in his biography tells us, it happened that at fifteen years of age, he had already served a dozen masters, the number of changes herein involved proceeding, not from any fault of his, but from the fact that his yearly increasing strength fitted him for promotion to harder tasks, and to be the recipient of better wages. All this while James Hogg made no advance either in reading or writing, and had indeed access to no books whatever, except the Bible; but having it, he learned by rote most of the Psalms of David in metre, according to the version used in Scotland, and these he admired much all his days. His wages, such as they were, he carried to his parents, who supplied him with clothes; but sometimes these were, according to his own account, "scarcely worthy of the appellation." Nevertheless, health, and the benefits accruing from a strong, well-knit frame, pulled him through much hard work and not a few hardships. With his sleeping-place in those days, always either in the stables or the cow-house, he manfully and cheerily made the best of his lot.

At fourteen years of age he had saved five shillings, with which he bought himself a fiddle; and with this he amused and solaced himself during his leisure moments, which do not appear to have been very numerous. Hogg remarks that his bed-room being such as described, his nocturnal performances on the fiddle when he had retired to his apartment, disturbed no one but himself and his associate quadrupeds.

His fiddle, although not precisely this one, continued to be a favourite source of amusement with him in all his after years; and the shepherd's violin, in its old red leather case, with the brass nails, remains in the careful possession of his family.

In his sixteenth year he became shepherd to Mr. Laidlaw of Willanslee, attaining now to an occupation which he considered was the one suitable for him in the natural fitness of things; as his birthright indeed, for his was an ancestry of shepherds. It was when shepherd at Willanslee that he first got a perusal of "The Gentle Shepherd," and of a metrical and somewhat romantic production, much admired by the peasant folk at that time, entitled the "Life and Adventures of Sir William Wallace."

Of both these he was immoderately fond, but deeply regretted that they were in verse, or at all events that they were not in the same sort of metre as his favourite Psalms. Such reading as he had learned he had nearly lost, and his progress in reading these two publications was slow exceedingly. After labouring through them both, Hogg writes that he found himself much in the state of a man of Eskdale-muir, who had borrowed Bailey's dictionary from a friend, and returned it with the remark, "I have read it all through, but canna' say that I understand it; it is the most confused book I ever saw in my life." With his usual perseverance, however, Hogg had patiently plodded through both these works; had read, learned, and inwardly digested as best he could.

With Mr. Laidlaw at Willanslee he had two things not to be despised, a comfortable home, and an occupation to his liking, and here James Hogg remained two years. He left Willanslee in the year 1790, being, as we think without doubt, in his twentieth year.

CHAPTER II.

1790—1801.

We have followed this inspired but still silent shepherd youth, pressing from one service to another, always trying to better his condition. At length a piece of great good fortune befell him. He was hired as shepherd to Mr. Laidlaw of Blackhouse, a farm on the Douglas Burn, in Yarrow, and here at Whitsunday, 1790, Hogg indeed found a resting place, which proved to be his home for the next ten years. Mr. Laidlaw was father of Mr. William Laidlaw, the future friend, tried and true, of Sir Walter Scott, and was a distant cousin of James Hogg's mother. Mr. Laidlaw treated our young shepherd with a kindness ever gratefully remembered. In his autobiography, he says that Mr. Laidlaw's conduct to him was more like that of a father than of a master.

Going to serve at Blackhouse was really the turning point in the life of James Hogg. The Laidlaws, father and sons, were shrewd, clever people, and fond of reading, Mr. Laidlaw possessing a stock of valuable books, which were all open for Hogg's perusal. Nor was he slow to avail himself of such a boon. Ever hungering as he was for knowledge, he made good use of his privilege, reading every thing he could lay hold on, or had leisure to peruse. His reading powers improved, and with his strong memory his mind began to expand, and to be a storehouse of much that was new to him.

Mr. Laidlaw's sons were about the same age as our young shepherd, and an intimate companionship commenced between them, which lasted throughout their lives. To William and George Laidlaw were addressed almost the only letters written by James Hogg in early life. Both brothers survived him, and at the time of his death William Laidlaw wrote as follows :—" Four and fifty years ago, when Hogg was nineteen years of age, his face was fair, round, and ruddy, with big blue eyes that beamed with humour, gaiety, and glee. And he was not only then, but throughout his chequered life, blessed with strong health, and the most exuberant animal spirits. His height was a little above the average size, his form at that period was of faultless symmetry, which nature had endowed with almost unequalled agility and swiftness of foot. His head was covered with a singular profusion of light brown hair, which he usually wore coiled up under his hat. When he used to enter church on Sunday (of which he was at all times a regular attendant), after lifting his hat, he used to raise his right hand to his hair to assist a shake of his head, when his long hair fell over his loins, and every female eye at least was turned upon him as with a light step he ascended to the gallery, where he usually sat."

"The first time," remarks Hogg, "that I attempted to write verses was in the opening of the year 1796." . . . . "For several years my compositions consisted wholly of songs and ballads, made up for the lasses to sing in chorus." . . . "I had no more difficulty in composing songs then, than I have at present," he writes in his autobiography, "and I was equally well pleased with them.

But then the writing of them!—that was a job! . . . . Having very little spare time from my flock, which was unruly enough, I folded and stitched a few sheets of paper which I carried in my pocket. I had no inkhorn; but in place of it I borrowed a small phial, which I fixed in a hole in the breast of my waistcoat, and having a cork fastened by a piece of twine, it answered the purpose fully as well." Thus equipped, he set to work on his ballads, having, even yet, as he says, "no method of learning to write, save by following the Italian alphabet; and therefore, I always stripped myself of my coat and vest when I began to pen a song, yet my wrist took a cramp, so that I could rarely make above four or six lines at a sitting. . . . I cannot make out one sentence by study, without the pen in my hand to catch the ideas as they rise, and I never write two copies of the same thing." But the time was drawing on when this indomitable energy and almost unequalled perseverance brought their reward, for Hogg learned to write fluently and well, and in his manuscripts scarcely an error of grammar or spelling is to be found. In Hogg's time many men of fair education were somewhat remiss in spelling, and we incline to think that sufficient credit has scarcely been given to the Ettrick Shepherd, when we look at his terrible want of education in any recognized shape, and, in consequence, the great difficulties which had to be overcome, ere the untaught rustic could take his place in the world as a man of letters.

Meantime, our young poet had been reading everything within his reach. He read all Mr. Laidlaw's books, and then subscribed to the library kept by Mr. Elder, in Peebles. He read newspapers, when he could get them, from beginning to end, advertisements and title inclusive. But newspapers were not plentiful in those days, and in the Vale of Ettrick they were few and far between. It may be that his reading, promiscuous as it seems to have been, embraced nothing very new. His life, so far as the outward world was concerned, was the uneventful life of a shepherd. Its loves and its friendships, like those of other lives, it doubtless had, its hopes and its disappointments, its sins and its sorrows, but these are long past and gone, and interest us little now, or not at all. James Hogg would have remained to us a shepherd lad, had it not come to pass that the innate genius which was in him would no longer be suppressed.

Not until after the death of Burns had Hogg ever so much as heard of the immortal ploughman. In 1796, the year of the death of Burns, a half daft man, Jock Scott by name, came to the hillside, where our shepherd and his sheep were. The time was summer, and Jock being, of course, in no hurry, repeated the poem of "Tam o' Shanter," to amuse Hogg, who seems to have been thunderstruck. "I cannot describe my feelings," says Hogg, and no wonder. The poem was repeated by Jock Scott, over and over again, till the Shepherd had it all by heart. And then, before leaving, his half-witted visitor said "it was made by one Robert Burns, a ploughman, and a wonderful poet,—the sweetest that ever was born," adding that he could never be equalled, nor his place filled.

Hogg was enchanted with the poem, but not by any means willing to endorse the opinion that the place of the author of it could never be filled. "Never" seemed to him a very wide word, and were there not poets still? Why should not he fill it? Was not he a poet? Ignorant shepherd lad though he was, forced to earn his bread by tending sheep among his lonely native hills, exposed to the dreary snows of winter and the wild torrents of summer, often cold and hungry, did he not feel that within him which told him that he was—that he should be a poet? He resolved to fill the place of Robert Burns. How he kept his resolution this history will show.

Meantime, I must again quote from Professor Veitch, who has so well depicted the would-be poet at this time of his life. "I like to picture Hogg at this period, as he herded on the Hawkshaw Rig, up the Douglas Burn—a dark, heathery slope of the Blackhouse Heights, which divide the Blackhope Burn from the other main feeders of the Douglas. There, on a summer day, during these ten years, you would find on the hill a ruddy-faced youth, of middle height, of finely symmetrical and agile form, with beaming light blue eyes, and a profusion of light brown hair that fell over his shoulders, long, fair, and lissome as a woman's."*

"Now it was here in these long summer days, that extend from morn to gloamin', and amid similar scenes in Ettrick and in Yarrow, that this simple, untaught, yet impassioned shepherd lad, with his heart full of the lore his mother and grey-haired men had taught him, developed the peculiar cast of his poetic genius. It was thus he learned to love simple, free, solitary nature so intensely; it was thus that his heart soared with, and yearned after, the 'Skylark' of a morning, and swelled into lyric passion of an evening 'When the Kye comes Hame;' it was thus he learned to conceive those exquisite visions of Fairy and Fairyland which he has embodied in 'Kilmeny,' to feel and express the power of the awful and weird in a way such as almost no modern poet has expressed them, as in 'The Fate of Macgregor,' 'The Abbot Mackinnon,' 'The Wife of Fife,' and others—to revel, in a word, in a remote, ideal, super-sensible, yet most ethereal beauty and grandeur, which has a spell we do not seek to analyse."*

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* Border History and Poetry, p. 488.

Hogg never took the place of Burns as a poet, nor was he even successor to Burns. The gift of each was distinct. To each soul was given its own imaginings. Both were peasants, both were self-taught geniuses, both poets. Had they known each other Robert Burns and James Hogg would not have quarrelled about pre-eminence; of that we feel assured. The pathos, so marked a feature in the poetry of Robert Burns, was also possessed in a high degree by Hogg. But it is not our wish to compare the two. "*Suum cuique tribuito.*"

There can, however, be no doubt that his introduction to the poetry of Burns, and the story of that poet's life, exercised a distinct and powerful influence on the mind of Hogg. "Every day," he tells us, "I pondered on the genius and the fate of Burns." He even wept as he pondered, and then the thought possessed him to emulate Burns. "I have more time to read than ever ploughman had.

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* Ibid., p. 490.

I can sing more old songs than ever ploughman can sing." He resolved to be a poet, and to "follow in the steps of Burns." Fired with this heroic resolve, he composed without stint, and sang his compositions to his own considerable satisfaction, and to the delight of his homely, but admiring companions. Much then composed never saw the light; nor does it much matter. Earlier effusions do not invariably tend to shed a reflected lustre on later fame.

In 1830 Hogg first ventured into print, his first published song being "Donald M'Donald," a capital and very spirited song on the then threatened invasion of Great Britain by Bonaparte, and one which attained very considerable popularity. We here transcribe the song, which is sung to the air of—

"*Woo'd an' Married an' a'.*"

My name it is Donald M'Donald,
  I live in the Hielands sae grand;
I hae followed our banner, and will do,
  Wherever my Maker has land.
When rankit among the blue bonnets,
  Nae danger can fear me ava;
I ken that my brethren around me,
  Are either to conquer or fa'.

Brogues an' brochen an' a',
Brochen an' brogues an' a';
An' is nae her very weel aff,
Wi' her brogues an' brochen an' a'?

What though we befriendit young Charlie?
To tell it I dinna think shame;
Poor lad! he came to us but barely,
An' reckon'd our mountains his hame.
'Twas true that our reason forbade us,
But tenderness carried the day;
Had Geordie come friendless amang us,
Wi' him we had a' gane away.

Sword an' buckler an' a',
Buckler an' sword an' a';
Now for George we'll encounter the devil,
Wi' sword an' buckler an' a'.

An' oh, I wad eagerly press him,
The keys o' the East to retain;
For should he gie up the possession,
We'll soon hae to force them again.
Than yield up an inch wi' dishonour,
Though it were my finishing blow,
He aye may depend on M'Donald,
Wi' his Hielanders a' in a row.

Knees an' elbows an' a',
Elbows an' knees an' a;
Depend upon Donald M'Donald,
His knees an' elbows an' a'!

Wad Bonaparte land at Fort-William,
Auld Europe nae langer should grane;
I laugh when I think how we'd gall him,
Wi' bullet, wi' steel, an' wi' stane;
Wi' rocks o' the Nevis an' Gairy,
We'd rattle him aff frae our shore,

Or lull him asleep in a cairny,
An' sing him—"Lochaber no More !"

Stanes an' bullets an' a',
Bullets an' stanes an' a' ;
We'll finish the Corsican callan,
Wi' stanes an' bullets an' a' !

For the Gordon is good in a hurry,
An' Campbell is steel to the bane,
An' Grant, an' M'Kenzie, an' Murray,
An' Cameron will hurkle to nane ;
The Stuart is sturdy an' loyal,
An' sae is M'Leod an' M'Kay ;
An' I their gude-brither, M'Donald,
Shall ne'er be the last in the fray !

Brogues an' brochen an' a',
Brochen an' brogues an' a' ;
An' up wi' the bonnie blue bonnet,
The kilt an' the feather an' a !"

"The first time I sang it" ("Donald M'Donald"), writes Hogg, "was to a party of social friends, in the Crown Tavern, Edinburgh. They commended it, on which I offered it to one of them for his magazine. He said it was much too good for that, and advised me to give it to Mr. John Hamilton, who would set it to music and get it engraved. I did so, and went away again to the mountains, where I heard from day to day that the popularity of my song was unbounded, and yet no one ever knew or enquired who was the author of it.

"There chanced to be about that time a great masonic meeting in Edinburgh, the Earl of Moira in the chair. On which occasion, Mr. Oliver, of the house of Oliver and Boyd, then one of the best singers in Scotland, sung, 'Donald M'Donald.' It was loudly applauded, and three times encored; and so well pleased was Lord Moira with the song, that he rose, and in a long speech discanted on the utility of such songs at that period, thanked Mr. Oliver. This to the singer. Yet, strange to say, he never enquired who was the author of the song."

The following curious anecdote is told by Hogg himself in connection with this plucky song. "There was at that period, and a number of years afterwards, a General M'Donald, who commanded the northern division of the British army. The song was sung at his mess every week day, and sometimes twice and thrice. The old man was proud of, and delighted in it, and was wont to snap his fingers and join in the chorus. He believed, to his dying day, that it was made upon himself, yet neither he nor one of his officers ever knew or enquired who was the author—so thankless is the poet's trade!" Enough all this to elate, and at the same time to keep humble, the still humble author from the braes of Yarrow.

The former seems to have been the effect produced, for Hogg goes on to say that he now considered himself a "grand poet," and forthwith proceeded to publish one thing after another, most of them without success, literary or pecuniary. "In 1801," he writes in his Autobiography, "I most sapiently determined on publishing a pamphlet, and appealing to the world at once." Having attended the Edinburgh Monday market with a number of sheep for sale, he finds a number still unsold, and remains till Wednesday in order to dispose of these. "Not knowing where to pass the interim, it came into my head that I would write a poem or two from my memory, and get them printed." No sooner said than done, "and I was obliged to select, not the best poems, but those that I remembered best. I gave them all to a person to print at my expense, and, having sold off my sheep on Wednesday morning, I returned to the Forest." A thousand copies are thrown off in this quick and summary way, which seems rather to have astonished our bard; and he goes on to say, "I knew no more about publishing than the man of the moon," the vanity of seeing his works in print having been the only motive that influenced him in this matter. But, "no sooner," says Hogg, "did the first copy come to hand than my eyes were open to the folly of my conduct, for on comparing it with the MS. which I had at home, I found many of the stanzas omitted, others misplaced, and typographical errors abounding in every page. Thus were my first productions pushed headlong into the world, without either patron or preface, or even apprising the public that such a thing was coming, and with all their imperfections on their heads. 'Will an' Keatie,' however, had the honour of being copied into some periodical publications of the time, as a favourable specimen of the work. Indeed, all of them were sad stuff, although I judged them to be exceedingly good!" The world seems to have agreed with him, and this work came to nothing.

Its outward and visible aspect was that of a pamphlet of sixty-two pages of whitey-brown paper, entitled "Scottish Pastorals, Poems, Songs, &c., and printed in the Grassmarket in 1801 by John Taylor."

That he afterwards regretted his impulsiveness cannot be doubted. Nothing was gained by having those immature, imperfect compositions brought before the public,—a public too, which as yet was not ready to accord even a small measure of praise to those rude attempts to attract its attention. People, indeed, were more disposed to ridicule than to commend. An unknown peasant comes to Edinburgh to sell his master's sheep, and embraces the opportunity thus afforded, to dispose of his own wares—his poetical effusions. Beautiful as many of them were afterwards acknowledged to be, the time had not yet come for James Hogg to obtain a hearing, and he soon regretted this premature rush into authorship. One result seems to have been that the poet's health suffered. Anxiety, we know, affects that of strong men, and Hogg must have had his own share of anxious hopes and fears as to the fate of his poems, cast unbidden on the world. The earliest letter we have of his is dated January 1801, and is addressed to Mr. William Laidlaw—

"Dear Sir,

I am never at a loss for these two words, my hand writes these involuntarily, but for another word of this succeeding epistle I have not yet consulted the dictionary of my brain, nor is there a thought or sentiment of it formed in embryo. I cannot begin in the old form thus, 'I am in very good health at present—thanks be to God for all his mercies; and I hope this will find you in the same.' Indeed I might have kept the last clause out of the quotation, and joined it to the subject—for indeed I do hope it—but as for my health whether it be come to Blackhouse, where it staid so long without interruption, unless expelled an hour or two by some internal tumult, or if it be gone into Edinburgh to see what became of my poems, I know not. It's certain she has left me.

I saw your face as lately as I did hers. And so ill have I taken the revolt of the gipsy, that I have shut myself up, for the most part, in the house, and much in bed ever since. Yet this short interval from business has proved fatal. I know you will stare now with your great round eyes. 'Fatal!' you will say, 'preserve us.' Yes, William, it has proved fatal, and I will tell it to you, though I have not told it to another in the world. I have committed a murder; for, I have actually put an end to the Scotch gentleman.

I have relieved you from your question now, and will proceed to speak of his end gravely, as becomes a christian. You were acquainted with his character and part of his progress. . . . . . . But, in short, I would be extremely glad of a hand from you at his resurrection. But how I shall attain it, I dont see. . . . . JAMES HOGG."

The concluding passage must refer to some character in prose or verse who had come to an untimely end.

There is little to relate of the few years which followed. Singularly unsuccessful in all his worldly undertakings, and, exasperated by the sharp treatment he was receiving at the hands of dame Fortune, he had even made up his mind to leave his native vale and emigrate to the island of Harris. In using the word emigrate, I speak advisedly, for it must be remembered that this was eighty years ago, and at that time the West Highlands seemed as distant from Ettrick Forest, as Canada does at the present day.

With this plan in view, he gathered together such worldly gear as still belonged to him, wrote his "Farewell to Ettrick," and with his shepherd's crook in his hand, resolved to seek a home elsewhere.

FAREWELL TO ETTRICK.

Farewell, green Ettrick, fare-thee-weel !
  I own I'm unco laith to leave thee ;
Nane ken the half o' what I feel,
  Nor half the cause I hae to grieve me.

There first I saw the rising morn ;
  There first my infant mind unfurled,
To ween that spot where I was born,
  The very centre of the world.

I thought the hills were sharp as knives,
  An' the braid lift lay whomel'd on them ;
An' glowered wi' wonder at the wives
  That spak o' ither hills ayon' them.

I've sung, in mony a rustic lay,
  Her heroes, hills, and verdant groves ;
Her wilds and valleys fresh and gay,
  Her shepherds' and her maidens' loves.

I had a thought,—a poor vain thought !
  That some time I might do her honour ;
But a' my hopes are come to naught,
  I'm forced to turn my back upon her.

She's thrown me out o' house an' hauld;
  My heart got never sic a thrust;
An' my poor parents, frail an' auld,
  Are forced to leave their kindred dust.

. . . .

I'll make the Harris rocks to ring,
  Wi' ditties wild where nane shall hear;
The Lewis shores shall learn to sing,
  The names of them I lo'ed sae dear.

But there is ane above the lave,
  I'll carve on ilka lonely green;
The sea bird tossin' on the wave,
  Shall learn the name o' bonnie Jean.

. . . .

But if I ken my dyin' day,
  Though a foreworn and waefu' man,
I'll tak my staff, an' post away,
  To yield my life where it began.

If I should sleep nae mair to wake,
  In yon far isle beyond the tide.
Set up a headstane for my sake,
  An' prent upon its ample side:

'In memory of a shepherd boy,
  Who left us for a distant shore;
Love was his life, and song his joy,
  But now he's dead—we add no more!'

Farewell, green Ettrick, fare-thee-weel!
  I own I'm something wae to leave thee;
Nane kens the half o' what I feel,
  Nor half the cause I hae to grieve me.

CHAPTER III.

1801—1812.

The scheme after all was frustrated. Forced by events to abandon the proposed emigration to Harris, Hogg, although bitterly disappointed, had courage to meet his trials in a manly spirit. Once more reduced to poverty, and with trouble and disappointment to contend with, the shepherd's hopefulness and good spirits came to his aid. After spending the summer in England, he returned in the winter to Scotland, and gladly took service with a farmer in Dumfriesshire. We venture to think his conduct exhibited true heroism. He had been led to expect better things. He had met with praise and flattery from some, and he knew well enough that he had the gift of poesy. True, he might never be able to make himself famous, or to get credit for his gift, but he knew it was there. He might have to die unheard of.

Yet the poor honest soul went bravely forth, and faced the world of toil and poverty again.

It was while tending his flocks at Mitchell-slack that he first met with Allan Cunningham, then a youth of eighteen. Also a son of the soil, Allan was destined to become famous as a song and prose writer. At that time, however, the young man was learning the trade of a stone mason. He had already tried the muse, and having read some of the shepherd's poetry, he was possessed with an intense desire to make his acquaintance. When lo! the shepherd, it was discovered, was residing within a few miles of the Cunninghams' house at Dalswinton. Allan and his brother James resolved to visit the poet. This they did on Queensberry Hill, where he was keeping his master's sheep, and writing verses in his leisure moments. Hogg gives a description of the meeting; we subjoin an extract as being characteristic of both bards.

After speaking of the two brothers coming across the hill, towards him, he says—"The eldest came up and addressed me, frankly, asking me if I was Mr. Harkness' shepherd, and if my name was James

Hogg? To both of which queries I answered cautiously, in the affirmative. . . . . The younger stood at a respectful distance, as if I had been the Duke of Queensberry, instead of a ragged servant lad herding sheep. The other seized my hand, and said, 'Well, then, sir, I am glad to see you. There is not a man in Scotland whose hand I am prouder to hold. . . . My name is James Cunningham, a name unknown to you, although yours is not entirely so to me; and this is my younger brother, Allan, the greatest admirer you have on earth, and himself a young aspiring poet of some promise. You will be so kind as to excuse this intrusion of ours on your solitude, for, in truth, I could get no peace, either night or day, with Allan, till I consented to come and see you.' I then stepped down the hill to where Allan Cunningham still stood, with his weather-beaten cheek towards me, and seizing his hard, brawny hand, I gave it a hearty shake, saying something as kind as I was able, and as stupid, I am sure, as could possibly be. From that moment we were friends." This meeting was referred to twenty years after, when Allan, writing to his friend, says—"We are both a little older and a little graver than we were twenty years ago, when we walked in glory and in joy on the side of old Queensberry."

It was a year or two previous to this that Hogg had met with Walter Scott—afterward the great Sir Walter—but then Mr. Scott, Sheriff of Selkirkshire. The poet's mother, Margaret Laidlaw, had a store of old ballads, as we know, laid up in her memory. Indeed, she was said to be better versed in that kind of lore than any one in the country-side. Her son James, having seen the first two volumes of "The Border Minstrelsy," had copied out several ballads from his mother's recitation, which he sent to Mr. Scott for his third volume. The "Shirra" then being at Ramsaycleugh, not far from Ettrick House, where the Hoggs lived, went to their cottage in order to make the acquaintance of mother and son. The former sung or recited ballads, with which the "Shirra" was delighted. Nor did she spare her criticisms either, for she told the visitor that he had spoiled the old songs by printing them.

"They were made for singing, and no for reading, an' they're neither richt spelled, nor richt setten doon." Mr. Scott received this homely criticism with a hearty laugh, but the good woman still held to her opinion. Giving the Sheriff a tap on the knee with her open hand, she said—"It's true enough for a' that." Referring to their meeting, Lockhart says, in his life of Sir Walter Scott—"Scott found under the garb, bearing, and aspect, of a rude peasant, or brother poet, a true son of genius and nature, hardly conscious of his powers." Thus began that intercourse, or at least that friendship between Sir Walter Scott and James Hogg, which was to close only when the great novelist was no more. In the midst of various vicissitudes, Scott ever afterwards proved himself a true friend to the shepherd, who, in return, loved and revered him sincerely. Scott advised him to publish a volume of original ballads in the old style, with which his mother had made him as familiar as with every day speech.

Acting on this advice, and while residing at Mitchell-Hack, he published "The Mountain Bard." Under the auspices of Sir Walter Scott, Hogg succeeded in getting Constable to publish the work. This gentleman dealt generously with the author; but, on the whole, the volume was not very successful, though some of the poems were remarkably good. One of his many biographers says of it, "As might have been expected from a mind yet wandering in the twilight, many of these pieces were very feeble, although some of them bore indications of that high imagination for which their author was afterwards so distinguished; nor do we know that even yet he has produced many finer things than "Sir David Graeme" and the fragment of "Lord Derwent." *

About the same time the shepherd published a treatise on a theme with which he was as well acquainted as with ballad lore. "Hogg on Sheep" was the title of it; and it possessed enough of merit to obtain a premium from the Highland Society. These two works, so dissimilar in character, had the result, however, of putting a little money into the empty pockets of the author. He found

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* *The Mirror*, Vol. xxi.

himself in possession of three hundred pounds, a sum so considerable as to fill his mind with visions of independence and wealth. Such a sum must have seemed a fortune to him. And so it was; and so it would have proved, had he not done a very foolish thing. Imagining, we suppose, that his three hundred pounds could have no end, he proceeded to take a farm—we believe in Dumfriesshire—a farm too which would have required thrice three hundred pounds to stock it. Only one result could be anticipated, and that result occurred—total failure.

Many, indeed most men, would have succumbed to such pecuniary difficulties as had beset him. It was not thus with James Hogg. His marvellous elasticity of spirits did not forsake him even now. The singular hopefulness and youthfulness of his heart came to his aid, and although chagrined in no small degree, he persevered in literary work in the hope of retrieving his ruined fortunes. With little besides his plaid and his staff, his inkhorn and his brave heart, he went to Edinburgh, and, settling himself down in a humble lodging, betook himself to the life of a literary man. Farewell for the present to hills and sheep, to mountain rills, to Yarrow braes, and Ettrick Shaws, which were very dear to the poet. He must work now with pen and brain alone.

While burdened with the weight of his farming troubles, Hogg had "given up all thoughts of poetry and literature of any kind." But now his case is different. He applies again to Constable to publish a volume of songs for him, though he had nothing else by him but the "songs of his youth," as he describes them. Constable was by no means enthusiastic, but at last agreed; and so, our poet having gathered or put together a collection of his own songs, along with a few by other writers, his work was published under the title of "The Forest Minstrel." It met with very scant success. This work he had ventured to dedicate to the Lady Dalkeith, who in later years, as the estimable Duchess of Buccleuch, proved herself so generous a friend to the poet.

His next attempt was to bring out a literary weekly paper. Several gentlemen eventually came to interest themselves in it, but the greater part of the writing was Hogg's own, and very hard work he had. "Literary drudgery" he calls it. The title of this publication was *The Spy*, but no pecuniary results of a satisfactory nature followed, and he brought the undertaking to a close at the end of one year. That it should have continued so long says much for his persevering energy, when we look at the limited funds at command of the editor, proprietor, and principal contributor! Among the friends who assisted him with articles for *The Spy* may be mentioned Mr. Robert Sime, uncle of Professor Wilson, and Mr. and Mrs. James Gray. Mr. Gray was classical master of the High School, Edinburgh, a man of no mean talent, and distinguished both for learning and literary ability. An especial interest attached itself to Hogg's intercourse with Mr. Gray, as they afterwards became connected by the marriage of the Ettrick Shepherd with the sister-in-law of Mr. Gray.

At this period the Shepherd seems to have had some means of making a living in addition to anything brought to him by his literary work. At least, we gather as much from the following letter from him, addressed to his brother, William Hogg:—

"Edinburgh, October 8th, 1811.

"Dear Brother,—As you once said to me, 'before I forget I will answer your kind letter,' and, indeed, I should have written to you long, long ago; but, indeed, any kind of regularity in my correspondence or, indeed, in anything that concerns me, need not be expected. I am very glad to hear that you and your family are all well; and as to the circumstance of your having been busy herding, that does not at all surprise me. That occurs, of course, whether the sheep had any great need of it or not.

I am not peculiarly partial to my nephew, Robert's company. . . . I really do not know how I will bear to have a boy in my room constantly, and yet I think it very hard that you should be obliged to board him anywhere else. I must surely endeavour to put him up somehow all the winter, and let him attend the High School. Pray, what do you intend him for? Believe me, my dear brother, proficiency in writing and arithmetic is of ten times more importance for a young man, who has his way to make in the world, than a knowledge of the classics. Perhaps we might bind him to some mercantile or bookseller line, where he might be improving in business, and attend his class besides. There is not as much time misspent on anything in this age as the learning of Latin by thousands of thousands of boys to whom it is of no avail. I think, if you intend bestowing a liberal education on any of them, you should reserve that for James, the junior Ettrick Shepherd, from the ardour of whose feelings and imagination, I should be led to expect something superlative. But, upon the whole, if you are intent on making Robert a great scholar, I must certainly endeavour to take him in, but I would much rather you had taken it into your head to make Margaret one, for she would be of great value to me, indeed, in keeping my house.

I have the ugliest old woman at present whom perhaps you ever saw. I rather fear she is a witch. I have taken a large flat in the High Street, at £36 per annum, but I have reserved only a part for myself. If Robert comes here I must have a room for him too.

My good old English lady is dead, which will I fear be none the better for me. I rather suspect I shall not be continued in office as factor by the Trustees, to whom I have applied, but have received no instructions, neither do I know as yet upon whom to draw for money. I have, however, her stamped power of factorage, rendering all my deeds and bargains binding, and I have about a dozen men employed in ditching and dyking, etc., whom I am obliged to visit, and whom I have to pay regularly.

"I was at Langholm the week before last, valuing and re-letting some fine farms belonging to General Dirom. I saw our parents on my return. Our mother was poorly, being seized with some pains in her back, that prevent her rising or walking upright. I sent her off some things to-day by the carrier.

"I have got an order to go to Balquither [Balquhidder], to part a farm between two proprietors.

. . . .

"I never call on Dr. C——. He told a friend he wished to employ me extensively in valuing and arranging waste lands. He has never done it.

"I am, your affectionate Brother,

"James Hogg."

The above interesting letter gives us a little insight into Hogg's history and domestic arrangements at this time, of which, however, we know nothing further. Apparently the poet had gone into business as a sort of land agent, which had proved unsuccessful, for we hear no more of it, nor of his *flat* in the High Street, nor of his unlovely domestic.

The Spy, when bound, formed a good sized quarto volume. It is long since out of print, very few copies being now to be had. One of these we saw lately, and the manner in which it came into its present owner's possession is not a little curious, as exemplifying the truth that a prophet has no honour in his own country. It is not only a copy of a rare book, but it is rendered doubly valuable by having the name of the author of each article written in the handwriting of the editor. Manifestly this had been Hogg's own copy, which he had lent to a neighbour, as the event proved, "not to be returned." Forty years afterwards our friend was in this neighbour's house, and talking casually to his widow about the Ettrick Shepherd and his books, the mistress, now an aged woman, pointed to a chest of drawers minus a foot,—"There's a book that aince was Mr. Hogg's." There, doing duty for the missing foot, supporting an old chest of drawers, our friend found *The Spy*. On looking into the volume, he soon discovered its nature, but the mistress, good woman, thought nothing of it. "Ye're welcome to it. I'm no needing it. I hae plenty o' things let alane an auld book. It's been lang haddin' up the drawers," she said indifferently. Our friend carried off the prize, which he now keeps among his casket of treasures.

It was well for James Hogg that there were in Edinburgh some friendly souls ready to take him by the hand, good, kind men and women who believed in him, and loved his simple nature. Foremost among these stood Mr. John Grieve, at that time in business in Edinburgh. He was a man of means and cultivation, and of singular kindness and true heartedness. He was also well acquainted with the men of letters who at that time adorned the northern metropolis, where his hospitable house was the frequent scene of pleasant reunions among the witty and the wise of the city. Mr. Grieve was an excellent friend to have, and being, moreover, himself a native of the "Forest," and knowing Hogg from those days when he was herding cows and running races against time, he was doubly interested in the poet. He also believed thoroughly in his abilities, and now that he had come to try his fortune in the great world, Mr. Grieve took up his cause. Much as the Shepherd depended upon himself, and manfully as he has shown the proved results of "Self Help," he most gratefully refers in his autobiography to the friendship and help of Mr. Grieve. He says Mr. Grieve was a friend whom "neither misfortune nor imprudence could once shake. I was fairly starved into Edinburgh, and if it had not been for Messrs. Grieve and Scott, would, in a very short time, have been starved out of it again." Mr. Scott was Mr. Grieve's partner, and for six months of the time he was in Edinburgh, Hogg lived either with the one or with the other, receiving, we learn, great kindness from these gentlemen. Mr. Grieve not only befriended the Shepherd in many ways, perhaps some of them kept secret, for sometimes about this period we fear he was in straits, but he did better for him even than that—he insisted on him working. Mr. Grieve encouraged him to persevere, having himself no doubt as to the result, that his friend, James Hogg, the Shepherd from their native Ettrick, would yet distinguish himself. Mr. Grieve not only hoped, but he truly believed in coming success. The sequel will show that his opinion was a correct one.

CHAPTER IV.

1813—1814.

PRESSED by Mr. Grieve to set to work and try his fate again as a poet, he promised to do so; and, having already by him some ballads and other compositions, he was able in the course of a few months thereafter to plan and complete the "Queen's Wake." He showed it to Mr. Grieve, who assured him "it would do," and accordingly the first edition of this poem appeared in 1813. It is a long lane that has no turning, and now the turning had come. Mr. Grieve was indeed a true prophet, and his friend from their own native Ettrick was a true poet. After all that had been urged to the contrary, in spite of sad discouragements, trying vicissitudes, and pecuniary troubles, James Hogg had at last shown what was in him. Worthily had he proved himself, and the reading public was taken by storm. "Who was this poet who sang the beautiful lay of

'Kilmeny,' and the incomparable 'Witch of Fife?' Under what bushel has he been hiding his talents all these years," asked the public. Well, the poet had not been far away, but how few among the many had held out a helping hand, or given a word of praise or encouragement to the simple peasant of Ettrick. Mr. Grieve, above all, had been the shepherd's never-doubting friend. Now he had his reward, the only one he ever asked, in the praises which from every quarter were accorded to the author of the "Queen's Wake." From the hour of its appearance, James Hogg was acknowledged as a man of genius. Instead of being regarded as a mere country lout, having some facility in verse making, he found himself all at once accepted as a poet. Honours of every kind were freely poured on him. Great men and great ladies deemed this new poet a fit associate for them. He was found as a guest in the most notable circles which the city could boast. It became fashionable to have the bard of the "Queen's Wake" at the supper-tables of Edinburgh. The little writing-table in his lodgings (we think in Stockbridge) was now usually covered with notes of invitation.

In speaking of the "Wake," a writer on the subject says, "This now celebrated work proved at once a great success, and firmly established the fame of the author, the poem of 'Kilmeny' alone being justly considered one of the purest gems of Scottish poetry." The day on which it appeared was one of the most intense anxiety, and although the extract is long, we are tempted to give the reader the poet's own account of what passed. "As I said, nobody had seen the work; and on the day after it was published I went up to Edinburgh, as anxious as a man could be. I walked sometimes about the street, and read the title of my book in the booksellers' window; yet I durst not go into any of the shops. I was like a man between death and life, waiting for the sentence of the jury. The first encouragement that I got was from my countryman, Mr. William Dunlop, who, observing me going sauntering up the plainstanes of the High Street, came over the Cross arm in arm with another gentleman, a stranger to me. I remember his salutation, word for word; and singular as it was it made a strong impression on me; for I knew Mr. Dunlop had a good deal of rough common sense. 'Ye useless poetical—that ye are,' said he, 'what hae ye been doing a' this time?' 'What doing, Willie; what do you mean?' 'Ye hae been pestering us with fourpenny papers, an' daft shilly shally songs, an' bletherin' an' speaking in the "Forum,"* an' yet had stuff in you to produce a thing like this.' 'Ay, Willie,' said I, 'have you seen my new book?' 'Ay, faith that I have, man, and it has cheated me out of a night's sleep.' . . From that day forward every one has spoken well of the work." Lord Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* writes, "The specimen we have already given of 'Kilmeny' will enable the reader to judge of the style and manner of this singular composition, upon the strength of which alone we should feel ourselves completely justified in assuring the author that no doubt can be entertained that he is a poet in the highest acceptation of the name."

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* A debating club.

Speaking of Hogg, the late Professor Ferrier says, "After a few hits and misses in various departments of literature, he succeeded in striking the right chord in 'The Queen's Wake,' which was published in 1813. This stamped Hogg, as, after Burns (*proximus sed longo intervallo*) the greatest poet that had ever sprung from the bosom of the people. It became at once, and deservedly, popular."*

Professor Wilson himself says, "'The Queen's Wake' is a garland of fair forest flowers, bound with a band of rushes from the moor. It is not a poem—not it, nor was it intended to be so. You might as well call a bright bouquet of flowers, a flower; which, by the bye, we do in Scotland. Some of the ballads are very beautiful; one or two even splendid; most of them spirited; and the worst far better than the best that ever was written by any bard in danger of being a blockhead. 'Kilmeny' alone places our shepherd (ay our shepherd) among the undying ones."

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* Preface to Professor Wilson's works.

How thoroughly Wilson appreciated the fine genius of the shepherd, appears from the following extract from the *Noctes*, in which he makes Hogg describe the origin of Kilmeny.

Shepherd. . . . "And among the broom-bushes an' the brackens, there I was beginning, when you reca'd me by that rap on the table, to sink awa' back again intil that dream o' dreams."

North. "The dream o' dreams."

Shepherd. "Ay sir,—The dream sir, in which I saw 'Kilmeny!' For though I wrote down the poem on the slate in the prime o' manhood, anither being than mysel did in verity compose or create it sir, ae day when I was lying a' by mysel' in that laneliest spat, wi but twa-three sheep aside me, ae linty and nae mair, but oh; how sweetly the glad cretur sang; and after *that some other cretur nor me* had composed or created it, she keepit whisper, whisperin' the words far within my ears till memory learned them a' off by heart as easy as the names o' christian creturs that we meet wi' on Sabbaths at the kirk; and frae that genie-haunted hour known now through a' braid Scotland, is the Ettrick Shepherd"——

North. "Britain and America"——

Shepherd. "But for many years a nameless man, or kent but by the name o' Jamie amang my simple compeers, I carried Bonny Kilmeny for ever in the arms o' my heart, kissin' her shut e'en when she sleepit, and her lips as calm as the lips o' death, but as sweet as them of an undying angel."

North. "And such was the origin of the finest Pastoral Lyric in our tongue."

Shepherd. "Sic indeed, sir, was its origin. For my sowl, ye see, had fa'en into a kind o' inspired dwam—and the green leddy o' the Forest, nae less than the Fairy Queen hersel, had stown out frae the land o' peace on my slumber; and she it was that stooped down and wi' her ain lily hand, shedding frae my forehead, the yellow hair, left a kiss upon my temples, just where the organ of imagination or ideality lies; and at the touch arose the vision in which

'Bonnie Kilmeny gae'd up the glen,'

and frae which you, sir, in your friendship say, that I became ane o' the immortals." *

The annexed letter from Mr. Gray is interesting, as revealing the light in which Hogg's new character was viewed by those who knew him best. This letter is addressed to William Hogg, the bard's elder brother and a man of singular intelligence and cultivation, although he lived and died a shepherd.

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* *Noc. Amb.*, 27 Jany., 1831.

"Edinr., 21 October, 1813.

"Sir,—I have reason to believe that it is not unknown to you, that I have for a number of years been in habits of the closest intimacy with your brother James. This connection has been to me the source of great pleasure, for from the commencement of our acquaintance I have considered him not only one of the most original poets, but also one of the most worthy men this country ever produced. The wonderful powers of his mind have been long known to a few friends, and in a certain degree to the world, but it was not till the publication of 'The Queen's Wake,' that his fame became so widespread as to silence the doubts of the most sceptical. This poem, which has had the most splendid success of any one published for a number of years, has excited a great degree of curiosity concerning the writer. It has even been thoughtlessly asserted that it was impossible that a work possessing so high and so varied excellencies could be produced by a man who had actually spent the greater part of his life in the character of a shepherd.

"To place this matter on a basis not to be shaken by future cavils, and to gratify a curiosity which not only the present but far distant ages must feel regarding one of the most extraordinary characters that has appeared in the lists of literature, I have for some time thought of drawing up a short memoir of the early life and literary history of my friend. For six or seven years I have watched his progress with a keen, though I can hardly say an impartial eye. Of that period therefore I can speak from my own knowledge; but of his early life I know nothing but what I learn from a letter of his own to Sir Walter Scott, and from occasional conversations with himself on the subject. Now, my dear sir, I know no one so able to supply this defect as yourself, etc. Your brother is well and has just returned from the Highlands, where he has been for a few weeks. . . .

"I am, my dear sir,
with sincere attachment to every member
of the poet's family,
"James Gray.

"4 Buccleuch Place."

All at once the name of James Hogg had become famous, and friends and admirers were ready to do him homage.

The "Queen's Wake" has retained its popularity up to the present day, and it is interesting to find in the book lately given to us by our beloved Queen, the following entry:—

"Her Majesty being in Edinburgh in 1871, writes in her diary:—"Thursday August 15.—Sat under the only tree—a thorn—which afforded shelter in the garden at Holyrood, sat on a small grassy mound, or 'hillock.' Here I read out of a volume of poems by the Ettrick Shepherd, full of beautiful things (which Brown had given me some years ago)."

Without doubt the volume referred to, had been the "Queen's Wake," which told of the gay doings in ancient Holyrood in the days of our Queen's fair but unfortunate ancestress.

"When royal Mary blithe of mood ;
Kept holiday at Holyrood."

"When Mary turned her wond'ring eyes,
On rocks that seemed to prop the skies ;
On palace, park, and battl'd pile ;
On lake and river, sea, and isle ;
O'er woods and meadows, bathed in dew,
To distant mountains wild and blue ;
She thought the isle that gave her birth,
The sweetest, wildest land on earth."
"QUEEN'S WAKE."

During the years he spent in Edinburgh before the "Queen's Wake" appeared, and while yet its author was unknown to fame ; in the days when Mr. Grieve, and Mr. Gray and others were almost the only persons alive to his merits, he made the acquaintance of Mr. Alexander Bald of Alloa, a friendship which remained unbroken till the poet's death. Mr. Bald, although engaged in mercantile pursuits in his native town was a man of literary tastes, and did much to encourage men of similar likings. James Hogg became a frequent visitor at his house, and there are a few persons still living who can recall those early days when the Ettrick Shepherd visited their town. In many of the houses in that busy little place he was a welcome and familiar guest. Mr. Bald is long since dead, but here is a letter addressed to him in these early years by the poet, and for which we are indebted to the kindness of Mr. Robert Maxton, in whose hands is the original.

"Edinburgh, Nov. 14, 1813.

"Dear Sir,

There has not a day passed since my return from the Highlands that I have not resolved to write you, and you see how strictly I have adhered to my resolution. I grieve to say it is only a slight specimen of my general character, for so far as I may judge my resolutions are generally good, but then they are not put in practice, and all the good effects which might have resulted from them are lost.

"But the truth is I never was so much engaged in my life as since my return to Edinburgh, and I hope to convince you by and bye that my journey has not been altogether in vain. But among all the incidents and all the treats that I met with among my own species, there was nothing pleased me so much as the notice taken of me by the young gentlemen of your town, for which I was indebted to your introduction. I was particularly taken with Mr. ———, and the more I think of him the more disposed I feel to admire him; not for the brilliancy of his parts, or the sublimity of his morals; but for the originality of character which peculiarizes him,—a strong mixture of stubborn generosity and lightsome eccentricity, possessing dispositions and a taste naturally good, without seeming to care about the matter. I could not help feeling a little hurt when I found that no means were left me of making any return *in kind* to my Shakesperian brethren * for all their hospitality. I may perhaps have my turn by and bye; at all events I hope that whoever of the number come to Edinburgh, that they will call on me as an acquaintance at No. 10 St. Ann Street, which I will take extremely kind.

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* The Shakesperian Club of Alloa.

"I have not forgot Mrs. Bald's unaffected kindness which I admire more, and which every sensible man will admire more than all the parade and ceremony in the world. I have not forgot the promise I made to send her some verses of mine in my own manuscript, to add to her little store of original scraps. I think I mentioned the elegy I had written on the death of my mother, which I have copied, but which I hesitate to send; something more appropriate to friendship may haply be found.

"Remember me to her, and if you are so good as let me hear from you soon, tell me how she is, as well as the little fairy—I forget its name.

. . . "The 'Wake' is going into a third edition, which is to be more than twice as large as the other two. Since I returned from the Highlands I have been very busy with a new poem which already extends to 1100 lines, and no appearance of any close. It is in the Stanza of Spenser, and much of it descriptive of Highland scenery. You will perhaps live to see the Highlands described differently from Mrs. Grant. The approbation it has received has rather astonished me at myself, and I am at a loss how to proceed, or whether to proceed at all or not ——."

"The remainder of this letter, including the signature, has unfortunately been cut away. R. M."

A reference is made in the above epistle to the

Shakesperian Club. Hogg had been made an honorary member in company with many other famous men, and had written for the club, "The ode to the genius of Shakespeare," beginning "Spirit all limitless." Below are two verses written by the Shepherd in the album of a young lady residing in Alloa. They speak of the kindly feelings subsisting between him and the good folks there :—

"I have a prayer I oft have pray'd
And oft would pray again,—
May the best blessing Heaven can send
On Alloa aye remain.

"I never yet did blessing ask
Either for kith or kin,
But the kind hearts of Alloa
That asking came within."—JAMES HOGG.

In the same album he also inscribed the first few lines of "The Descent of Love," a poem afterwards published. The muse, however, on this occasion had been seemingly wooed in vain, for the poet comes to an abrupt close, adding "I have sticket this poem. —J. H."

Although a little in advance we transcribe part of a letter addressed to Mrs. Bald dated

"Meggernie Castle,
June 18th, 1816.

"My dear Mrs. Bald,

"I promised when I parted with your husband to write to him from the Highlands, and I promised to you some years ago, to give you a specimen of my best *hand of write.* Now as a poet is never expected to fulfil above one half of what he promises it has come into my head to-day to write to you and thus 'fell twa dogs wi ae bane.' Since I left you I have traced the Tay, the Tummel, the Lyon, and the Urchay to their most minute sources, besides many smaller glens in Lorn, Appin and Morven. I have fixed all the scenery of my next and greatest poetical work; with the country which I have left I must as a poet live or die for ever, and you will not think it anything strange that I have lingered so long in a country where I must so often wander in imagination, while my sheepish and indolent frame is so far distant in reality. I have besides since I saw you, taken nearly 100 dozen of trouts, and at a modern calculation have waded at least a hundred miles. I have drunk so much Highland whiskey, that I actually dreamed one night, that I was turned into a cask of that liquor,—that the gaugers took me into custody and fairly proved me to be a legal seizure, about which I was greatly concerned. I have not, however, fallen into any mistake of great consequence, saving once that I mistook the north for the south, and after walking at least thirty miles, I landed at night in the same glen which I had left in the morning. I have likewise been in sore jeopardies which it is needless to enumerate; but there was one so truly ludicrous that I cannot help mentioning it. In crossing that wild and rugged chain of mountains, between the braes of Glenorchy and Appin, I chanced to cross an immense wreath of snow that was in my way, and filled the whole of a ravine or cleuch as we call such a place in the south; when about the middle of this, in one moment I vanished from the face of the earth, and before I had time to think I found myself standing in the middle of a huge burn so deep from the surface that I could hardly see daylight above my head, at the small aperture by which I entered. I was completely vaulted in, and saw no means of escape save roaming my way down the track of the burn, which I tried, but soon found myself in utter darkness, and being afraid of linns I was obliged to return. I began to think in good earnest that I was at the end of my journey, and could not help saying to myself, 'this is a queer place for a poet to be in,' and I assure you it was hard work indeed before I extricated myself.

"When I began this journal of my tour to you, I intended to give you likewise an account of all the various characters that I had met with, which I am certain would have amused you, but on beginning to think them over I find the subject would take a volume. I write to you from a very romantic and beautiful spot indeed, but the greatest beauty about the castle is its lady, who is one of those beings that grace our nature, and form the connecting link between angels and the human race.

"My course is so much the sport of casualties that I cannot as yet say assuredly whether I shall return by Alloa or not. I feel anxious to do so,—my heart cleaves a good deal to Alloa. There is a warmth of friendship in your circle of friends towards me, which I have noted with delight, and which I believe has originated solely with your husband, the ardour of whose attachment to me, wholly unmerited as it is, has often astonished me. I will see you all I think in ten days at most. It will be as good that Mrs. —— have her piano tuned, that Mr. M'Isack have a stock of fish-hooks on hand, and that the girl whom —— *intends for my bride* have on her best looks. . . . And now my dear Mrs. Bald I have only room to say that I think this tour of which you have here the journal, will be productive of something of consequence, at least to me; at all events keep this letter as the first indication of good and high intentions, until you see the sequel.

"Yours most truly,

"JAMES HOGG."

Two editions of the "Queen's Wake" were quickly disposed of, but very unfortunately the publisher became unable to implement his promised payment. This was sad certainly for the hard-worked and hard-pressed poet after all his past troubles. But a third edition was called for in 1814, and this was published by Mr. Blackwood of Edinburgh, and now the author began to reap the fruit of his labours. For this edition he received from Mr. Blackwood very tangible proof that his genius was appreciated. Fame was good enough in its way, but fame with pockets still empty was not an encouraging state of matters. But now things were changed, and he was to be in better circumstances. No longer the poor shepherd only, but James Hogg, "the Ettrick Shepherd," a recognized poet, reputably dressed, the occupant of comfortable apartments, and courted mayhap even more than was good for him by Edinburgh "society."

In a letter to his friend, Mr. William Laidlaw, dated Edinburgh, 11th July, 1814, he says :—

"Dear Laidlaw,

"I received yours yesterday. . . I intended to have been at Tinnis ere now, but have not had courage to leave Edinburgh. Indeed I am at this very time so confounded with agreeable invitations to spend the summer, that I do not know what to do. I have very extraordinary to read to you when you next come to Edinburgh.

"Yours ever,
"JAMES HOGG."

The following interesting letter from Robert Southey, will let us see that Hogg was now universally received into the guild of Poets :—

"Keswick, Dec. 1, 1814.

"Dear Hogg,

"Thank you for your books. I will not say that the 'Queen's Wake,' has exceeded my expectations, because I have ever expected great things from you, since in 1805 I heard Walter Scott by his own fireside at Ashiestiel repeat 'Gilman's-cleuch.' When he came to that line 'I ga'e him a' my gowd father,' the look and the tone with which he gave it was not needed to make it go through me. But the 'Wake' has equalled all that I expected. The improvements in the new edition are very great, and they are in the poems which are most deserving of improvement, being the most impressive and the most original. Each is excellent in its way, but 'Kilmeny' is of the highest character. The 'Witch of Fife' is a rich work of fancy, 'Kilmeny' a fine one of imagination, which is a higher and rarer gift. The poems have given general pleasure throughout the house; my eldest girl often comes out with a stanza or two of 'The Witch,' but she wishes sometimes that you always wrote in English. The 'Spy' I will go through more at leisure.

"I like your praise both of myself and my poem, because it comes from a good quarter. You saw me when and how a man is best seen, at home, and in his every day wear and tear, mind and manners. I have no holiday suit and never seek to shine. Such as it is my light is always burning. Somewhat of my character you may find in Chaucer's 'Clerk of Oxenford,' and the concluding line of that description might be written, as the fittest motto under my portrait, 'Gladly would I learn and gladly teach.' I have sinned enough to make me humble in myself, and indulgent towards others. I have suffered enough to find in religion not merely consolation, but hope and joy, and I have seen enough to be contented in and thankful for, the sort of life in which it has pleased God to place me.

"We hoped to have seen you on your way back from Elleray. I believe you did not get the ballad of the 'Devil and the Bishop,' which Hartley transcribed for you. I am reprinting my miscellaneous poems collected into three volumes, so, your projected publication will have the start of it greatly, for the first volume is not ready for the press, and there is a collected copy of the ballad with its introduction in Ballantyne's hands, which you can make use of, before it will be wanted in its place.

"You ask me why I am not intimate with Wilson. There is a sufficient reason in the distance between our respective abodes. I seldom go even to Lloyd's, and Elleray is far enough from either of these places to make a visit the main business of the day. So it happens that except dining in his company once at Lloyd's many years ago, and breakfasting with him here not long afterwards, I have barely exchanged salutations with him unless once or twice when we met upon the road. Perhaps, however, I might have sought him had it not been for his passion for cock-fighting. But it is a thing which I regard with abhorrence.

"Would that 'Roderick' were in your hands for reviewing. I should desire no fairer nor more competent critic. But it is of little consequence what friends or enemies may do for it now; it will find its due place in time, which is slow but sure in its decisions. From the nature of my studies, I may almost be said to live in the past; it is to the future that I look for my reward, and it would be difficult to make any person not thoroughly intimate with me, understand how completely indifferent I am to the praise or otherwise of the present generation, farther than as it may affect my means of subsistence, which, thank God, it can no longer essentially do. There was a time when I was materially injured by unjust criticism; but even then I despised it, from a confidence in myself, and a natural buoyancy of spirit. It cannot injure me now, but I cannot hold it in more thorough contempt.

"Come and visit us when the warm weather returns. You can go nowhere that you will be more sincerely welcomed.

"As ever, God bless you,

"ROBERT SOUTHEY."

Shortly before this, Hogg had spent a few days with Southey, which accounts for the friendship between the brother poets. The Ettrick Shepherd has been often blamed for undue egotism, but after reading the above letter, with its many excellent sentiments and high religious tone, some readers might be excused if they thought that Hogg did not stand alone in the possession of a very pardonable vanity. If time is, as Southey thought, the slow but sure arbitrator of the poet's future, we fear "Roderick" is now, in these sixty years, all but consigned to oblivion.

CHAPTER V.

1815—1816.

While Hogg was living and working in Edinburgh, or availing himself of the many invitations given him by friends and admirers, his parents were growing old, and needed assistance from their son. Of late his visits to "The Forest" had been of necessity both few and short, but he had not forgot the parents he had left there. Forgetfulness of kith and kin was altogether foreign to James Hogg's warm, loving, nature. He felt that whatever of the world's good things fell to his lot, "the old folks at home" must have their share; they, too, must profit by his prosperity. But he had, in the meantime, no home to offer to his father and mother, now getting old and stiff in their lowly cottage at Ettrick-House. He had already made more than one effort to obtain a small holding from the Duke of Buccleuch, where they might find a home, and be tended in their advancing years. Hitherto he had not been successful in attaining this, but had received favours and patronage alike from the Duke and Duchess. They knew what prompted Hogg's desire in this matter, and his wish was to be gratified in the end.

The Duchess of Buccleuch, the excellent and truly amiable lady to whom the shepherd had dedicated "The Forest Minstrel" four years before, died in August 1814. By her death the poet felt that he had lost a very kind and most considerate friend. She had not forgotten him, however; for, in her last illness, she reminded her sorrowing husband, to care for the poor poet when she should be no more.

The closing lines from "The Pilgrims of the Sun," which was at the time passing through the press, were written in commemoration of his lamented benefactress. They expressed in verse his own feelings, as well as those of others in the South of Scotland, where the Duchess Harriet of Buccleuch continued to be long remembered with love and veneration.

"Late there was seen on summer tide,
A lovely form that wont to glide
Round green Bowhill, at the fall of even,
So like an angel sent from Heaven,
That all the land believed and said
Their Mary Lee was come from the dead;
For since that time no form so fair
Had ever moved in this earthly air:
And whenever that beauteous form was seen
To visit the walks of the forest green,
The joy of the land ran to excess
For they knew that it boded them happiness.
Peace, love and truth for ever smil'd,
Around that genius of the wild.

"Ah me! there is omen of deep dismay,
For that saintlike form has vanished away.
I have watched her walks by the greenwood glade,
And the mound where the harper of old was laid,
I have watched the bower where the woodbine blows,
And the fairy ring, and the wondrous roses,
And all her haunts by Yarrow's shore;
But the Heavenly form I can see no more.
She comes not now our land to bless,
Or to cherish the poor and fatherless,
Who lift to Heaven the tearful eye,
Bewailing their loss—and well may I!
I little weened when I struck the string,
In fancy's wildest mood to sing
That sad and low the strain should close,
'Mid real instead of fancied woes."

The Duke of Buccleuch did not forget the request of his dying wife. In a few months he had it in his power to fulfil it, and to provide for the poet's needs. The following letter addressed by Hogg to his friend Mr. William Laidlaw, will show how the wishes of the lady were carried out:—

"Edinr. Jany. 29, 1815.

"Dear Laidlaw,

"The weather seems so uncertain and broken that I believe I must postpone my journey to Traquair, and for some time, although Nicholson * is out of all patience for the dog, and was perfectly in raptures when he heard that I was coming out for him. It is strange that I cannot get him in.

"You have won your shilling. There was scarcely one third of the club counted above me in our play for the medal. . . . With regard to the making of my new curling stones, you need not much mind until we see where we are to play next year, for yesterday I was waited on by Major Riddell (the Duke's factor), who delivered me a letter from the Duke of Buccleuch, granting me in the most kind and flattering manner the farm of the Moss-end (Eltrive Lake), without any rent, or with what his Grace calls a nominal rent. The Major was extremely polite, and said that he had never been commissioned to confirm any grant that gave him more pleasure, and that he wished much to be

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* A portrait painter to whom the poet was sitting for his likeness.

better acquainted with me. He said it was a pity it was not better worth my acceptance, but that it was the only place vacant, and would do for the present, as a retreat. He mentioned the exchange with the Craig, which was to take place, and said that whatever fell to the Duke's share, would of course fall to me. This I knew would be a mistake, but as 'a gi'en horse sudna be lookit i' the mouth' I only said that with all these arrangements I would take no concern. I have written to his Grace to-day, shortly acknowledging the benefit conferred. You must get word to my father, who will be very uneasy.

"Yours truly,

"JAMES HOGG."

The poet's mother died in 1813, so that she had passed away before he had a house of his own which she might have shared. She had no small part in determining the bent of her son's mind, and she had lived to see him make a name for himself, and become famous.

Robert Hogg and Margaret Laidlaw had no daughters, and so the old man was left desolate and alone in the wayside cottage at Ettrick. As soon as possible his son took him to live with him at Eltrive Lake, the homestead granted him by the Duke of Buccleuch, and there the old man spent the remainder of his days and there he died.

In February of 1815 Hogg was still in Edinburgh. He was sitting for his picture, and most impatient he seems to have been under the ordeal, if we may judge from what he writes to Mr. Laidlaw on the 14th:—

"Dear Laidlaw,

"If I cannot procure Lion before this day eight days, I am positively condemned to sit ages and centuries in company with a butcher's colley, in the town, as unlike my strupit whelp as I to Hercules. If you can submit to this, why, then, I must; but positively I shall never look at my own picture. If I were to come myself I have no time to stay, for the artist says he would not that my picture were not in the exhibition this year for £50, and he cannot give it a tone until the figures are adjusted. Two nights and a day are quite sufficient for Rob to stay here, and in that case he will get the dog home with him.

"Yours ever.—J. H."

In the spring of 1815 the poet took possession of his little farm. In 1817 David Wilkie, the celebrated Scottish artist, visited Eltrive in company with Mr. William Laidlaw, and found the Ettrick Shepherd, of whom he had heard so frequently, living in a humble cottage, with a country girl for servant. Master and maid did their best to get a decent meal to place before the visitors, the worthy host having no idea who Laidlaw's companion was. A remark made by Laidlaw, however, excited his curiosity, and he exclaimed, "This is no the great Mr. Wilkie." "It's just the great Mr. Wilkie, Hogg." The Shepherd's eyes glistened with pleasure, and grasping the artist's hand, he exclaimed with fervour, "Mr. Wilkie, I cannot tell you how proud I am to see you in my house; and how glad I am to see you are so young a man." David Wilkie was then in the midday of his fame. He had mingled in the society of the noble and the learned, but had probably never received a more graceful compliment than he did that day in the cottage on the banks of the Yarrow. When the story was repeated to Sir Walter Scott, he exclaimed—so at least says Mr. J. G. Lockhart—"The fellow! it was the finest compliment ever paid to man."

Wilkie had come direct from Abbotsford under the guidance of Mr. William Laidlaw, being desirous of seeing the shepherd who had written the "Queen's Wake," and he was found that morning exceptionally joyous, for Blackwood, the well-known publisher, had written with approval of Hogg's famous "Chaldee manuscript" which he had sent him. A loaf of bread, oat cakes, Yarrow trout, and fried parr, were component parts of the breakfast which the poet and his country servant managed to produce in honour of the occasion. He had those feelings of a gentleman which are found naturally associated with genius, and that hearty hospitality which was one of his undoubted characteristics. At the same time, "the auld clay biggin" in which he first took up his abode, rejoicing that he could there shelter his aged father, was a poor place of reception. It was penetrated by "all the winds of heaven," but many a pleasant hour was spent in that cottage, says one of the many and frequent visitors, although "all the plaids were hung up round the door as a screen from the cold." But growing fame brought more visitors. Some came from a distance to see the bard in his lonely residence among the green hills. Perhaps there were too many, although their coming could not have been altogether distasteful to our shepherd, for it is always pleasant to find one's self worthy of recognition. Anyhow, a new cottage became necessary.

The instructions to the architect were simple, and one of them singular, viz: "that he must so arrange the apartments that 'a' the reek should come out at ae lum.'" This was by way of protection against the tribes of tourists who were finding their way to Eltrive Lake. As the kitchen fire was always burning, there was to be no indication afforded by the other chimneys whether the master was at home or not. We fear, however, this well-meant precaution was without effect, as up to the day of his death, the genial master of Eltrive was a victim to visitors, to whom he seemed incapable of denying himself.

But the Shepherd's pen was not idle. He writes to Mr. William Laidlaw at Traquair, in December, 1815.

"Dear William,

"I am sorry the number of the *Review* is not here. Bridges got a loan of it, who takes care never to return a book. . . . . I have had good, very very high accounts of the 'Poetic Mirror.' A new edition is already called for. I suppose you have it long ere this time, else I would have sent you a copy.

"Yours ever, most truly,

"JAMES HOGG."

"The Poetic Mirror" alluded to in this note was published in 1815. Its history, being somewhat singular, deserves a few words. Hogg had formed a plan to publish a collection of ballads from the several pens of the more famous living poets of Britain, but having been disappointed in securing what he desired in the way of contributions, he took the bold step of writing the poems himself in the styles of the authors who were intended to have figured in the volume. Many promises and a few fulfilments had been given him. When the "Poetic Mirror" made its appearance, it professed to be a collection of poems by various distinguished authors. The whole of these poems, with one exception, were from Hogg's own pen. The step he took was a bold one certainly, but so true were the imitations that for some time many people believed these pieces to be really what they professed to be. People, however, who knew Hogg's style well, and who had the habit of judging for themselves, soon saw through the veil, and made up their minds that the admitted editor was also the real author. One may overlook any rash eccentricity in the matter, since in the publication of the "Poetic Mirror" there was given to us one of Hogg's best and happiest efforts, "The Gude Grey Cat," meant as a sort of imitation of his own "Witch of Fife." It is a beautiful piece, describing in fine poetic imagery the fairy guardianship of seven lovely and motherless maidens. A delightful vein of quiet satire runs through it, as well as a tone of high morality, entitling it to a foremost place among the Shepherd's writings. Unfortunately for its future popularity, the poem was couched in antique Scotch, than which there are few more difficult dialects; and it could not but suffer from its peculiar spelling. Only a few are able to read the old Scotch with ease, and fewer still will take the trouble to translate, as they go along, the words into more modern language. Hogg, recognising the awkwardness of the language which he had employed, translated "The Gude Grey Cat" into modern Scotch, in which dress it appeared in one of the magazines of the day, and of this we are glad to have procured a copy, here transcribed.

THE GUID GREY CAT.

There was a cat, and a guid grey cat,
  That dwelt in the tower of Blain,
And many have heard of that guid grey cat
  That never shall hear again.

She had a brind upon her back,
  And a bend above her bree,*
Her colours were the marled hues
  That dapple the cran berrye.

But she had that within her eye
  That man may never declare;
For she had that within her eye
  That mortal could not bear.

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* Eye-brow.

Sometimes a lady sought the tower
  Of rich and fair beautye ;
Sometimes a hare came slyly there
  Hitching richt wistfully.

But when they searched the tower of Blain,
  And sought full hard and long,
They found nought but the good grey cat
  Sitting thrumming at her song.

Then up she rose and paced away
  Full stately o'er the stane,
And streekit our her braw hind leg
  As nought at all had been.

Well might the wives in that country
  Raise up a grievous stir,
For never a cat in all the land
  Durst moop a mell with her. *

Whenever they looked into her face
  Their fears up grew so rife,
They snirted and they yelled thro' fright,
  And ran for death and life.

The laird of Blain had aince a spouse,
  Right comely good and kind ;
But she had gone to the land of peace,
  And left him sad behind.

He had seven daughters all so fair
  Of more than earthly grace,—
Seven bonnier babes ne'er breathed the air,
  Nor smiled in parent's face.

One day when they were all apart,
  He said with heavy moan,—
"What will become of my dear babes
  Now when their mother's gone ?

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* Toy or caress.

O who will lead your tender minds
  The path of ladyhood ;
To think as ladies ought to think,
  And feel as maidens should.

Well might it kythe * on maiden's mind
  And maiden's modestye,
The want of one was fitted well
  For task unmeet for me."

But up then spoke the good grey cat
  That sat by the hearth stone,—
"Now hold your tongue, my dear master,
  Nor make so deep a moan,

For I will breed your seven daughters
  To winsome ladyhood ;
To think as ladies ought to think
  And feel as maidens should.

I'll breed them fair, I'll breed them free,
  From every shade of sin ;
Fair as the blooming rose without
  And pure in heart within.

Full sore astounded was the laird,—
  A frightened man was he ;
But the sweet babys were full fain,
  And chuckled joyfullye.

May Ella took the good grey cat
  Right fondly on her knee,
"And hath my pussy learned to speak,—
  I trow she learned of me !"

The cat sat thrumming at her song
  And turned her haffat † sleek,
And drew her bonny bawsined ‡ side
  Against the baby's cheek.

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*Kythe, appear. †Haffat, side of the head. ‡Bawsined, brindled.

But the laird he was a cunning laird,
  And he said with speeches fair,—
"I have a feast in hall to-night,
  Sweet pussy be you there."

The cat she set a look on him
  That turned his heart to stone,—
"If you have feast in hall to-night
  I shall be there for one."

The feast was laid, the table spread,
  With rich and noble store ;
And there was set the Bishop of Blain
  With all his holy choir.

He was a wise and wily wight
  Of witch and warlockry ;
And many a wife had burnt to lime,
  Or hanged upon a tree.

He knew their marks and moles of hell,
  And made them joyfullye
Ride on the red hot goad of iron,—
  A pleasant sight to see.

The Bishop said a holy grace,
  Impatient to begin ;
But nothing of the good grey cat
  Was found the tower within.

But in there came a fair ladye
  Clad in the silken sheen,—
A winsomer and bonnier May
  On earth was never seen.

She took her seat at table head
  With courtly modestye ;
While every bosom burnt with love,
  And fixed was every eye.

Sweet was her voice to all the ring
Unless the laird of Blain,
For he had heard that very voice
From off his own hearth stane.

He barred the doors and windows fast,
He barred them to the *gyn;*
"Now in the grace of Heaven," said he,
Your exercise begin.

There is no peace nor happiness
For my poor babies' souls
Until you try that weirdly witch,
And roast her on the coals.

"If this be she," the Bishop said,
"This beauteous comely May,
'Tis meet I try her all alone,
To hear what she will say."

"No by the rood," the laird replied,
"None shall from this proceed,
Until I see that wicked witch
Burnt to an izel red."

The Bishop kneeled him down and prayed
Till all their hairs did creep;
And aye he sounded and he prayed,
Till all were fast asleep.

He prayed against sin and Satan both,
And deeds of shift and shame;
But all the while his faithful hands
Pressed close the comely dame.

Well saw the laird but nothing said,
He knew in holy zeal
He groped round for the marks of hell
Which he did know full well.

And aye he pressed her lily hand,
And kissed it ferventlye,
And prayed between, for oh a kind
And loving priest was he.

The Bishop stopp'd and started sore,
Wide gaping with affright,
For oh that fair and lily hand
Had turned a paw outright.

A paw with long and crooked claws
That breast of heavenly charm,
Had turned to brisket of a cat,
Full hairy and full warm.

And there she sat on long settee,
With eyes of glancing flame,
And they were on the Bishop set
Like pointer's on his game.

The Bishop turned him round about
To see what he might see,
She stuck a claw in every ear,
And thro the roof did flee.

The cat went through withouten stop,
Like shadow through the day,
But the great Bishop's fleshy form
Made all the roof give way,

The ceiling folded like a book,
The sarking crashed amain,
And shreds and flaws of broken stones
Fell to the ground like rain.

The broad full moon was up the sky,
The night was like a day,
When the great Bishop took his jaunt
Up thro' the milky way.

He cried so loud and lustilye,
The hills and sky were riven ;
Oh such brave cries were never heard
Between the earth and Heaven.

They saw him spurring in the air,
And flinging horridlye,
And then he prayed and sung a psalm
For frightened sore was he.

But still his wailings fainter grew
As the broad Heaven he cross'd,
While some said that they heard them st
And some said all was lost.

There was a herd on Dollar Law
Turning his flocks by night,
Or stealing in a good haggis
Before the morning light.

He heard the sound come thro' the air,
And saw the twain pass by ;
The cat she screwed her tail about
As sorely pinched to fly.

Yet still was thrumming at her song
Though he was sore in thrall,
As cat that hath a jolly mouse
Goes purring through the hall.

The grey cat's song it was so sweet
As on the night it fell ;
The moor cock danced a sevensome ring
Around the heather bell.

The foumarts jigged around the pools,
The maukins round the kail,
And the otter tripped a minuet
As he walked o'er the dale.

The hurcheons * held their bumkin dance
Along the broomy heugh,
And the good tup hog rose from his lair
And waltzed with the ewe.

The Grey Cat's Song.

Murr, my Lord Bishop
I sing to you,
Murr, my Lord Bishop
Baw-lilli-lu.

That night a hind on border dale
Chanced at his door to be,
He saw a great 'clypse of the moon,
And ben the house ran he.

He laid a wisp upon the fire,
And blew full lang and sair,
And read the Belfast Almanack,
But the 'clypse it was not there.

Oh but that hind was sore aghast,
And half to madness driven,
For he thought he heard a drowning man
Sighing alongst the heaven !

That night a great philosopher
Had watched on Etna's height,
To see the rising of the sun
And the beauteous dawning light,

And all the lightsome lines of gold
As on the sea they fell,
And watch the fiery flame and smoke
Come smouldering up from hell.

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* Hurcheons—hedgehogs.

He looked East, the day came on
  Upon his jocund path ;
And the broad moon hung in the West—
  Her paleness was like death.

And by her sat one little star,
  When all the rest had gone,
'Twas like a wan and falling gem
  In the wide heaven alone.

Then the philosopher grew sad,
  And turned his eye away,
For it minded him of the earthly great
  In death or in decay.

He turned his face unto the North
  The falling tear to dry,
And saw a thing of curious make
  Between the earth and sky.

'Twas like a bird without a wing,
  Most wondrous to behold,
And bore a forked thing along
  With swiftness manifold.

And aye it grew as nigh it drew,
  Oh but his heart beat sore ;
The sun, the moon, the stars were gone
  He thought of them no more.

His eyes were dazzled with the sight,
  Thick crept his bristling hair,
When he beheld a jolly priest
  Come swizzing through the air.

The cat she held him by the lugs
  Above the awsome hole ;
And oh the dread that he was in
  No mortal man could thole.*

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* Thole—bear.

He roared out, "pussy, hold your gripe,
Hold fast and do not spare ;
Oh ! drop me on the earth or sea,
But do not drop me there."

But she was a doure and deadly cat,
And she said with lightsome air,—
"You know heaven is a blessed place,
And all the priests go there."

"Oh sweet, sweet pussy, hold your gripe,
Spare neither crook nor claw ;
Is ever that like heaven above
In which I'm like to fa'."

But aye she shook him by the lugs,
Attour the dreadful den,
ture Until her gripe gave slowly way—
Sore was he gasping then !

Down went the Bishop, down like lead
Into the hollow night !
His gown was flapping in the air
When he was out of sight.

They heard him hoving down the deep
Till the croon it died away ;
It was like the stound of ane great bombee
Swift sounding thro' the day.

All was in slumbering quietness
When he went down to hell ;
But such a morn was never seen
When the great Lord Bishop fell.

Then came the din, the fire and smoke
Up rushing violentlye,
And towered away upright to heaven—
A glorious pile to see.

For aye it rolled its fleecy curls
Out to the rising sun;
Its eastern side all gilded gold,
The rest a darksome dun.

Sore the philosopher was moved,
And wist not what to say,
For he saw naught of the good grey cat,
But he saw a lady gay.

Her gown was of the grass-green silk,
Her eye was like the dew;
Her hair was like the threads of gold
That round her shoulders flew.

Her garters were the rainbow's hem
That she tied beneath her knee;
And aye she combed her yellow hair,
And sung full pleasantly.

"I am the queen of the fairy land,
I'll do no harm to thee;
For I am the guardian of the good,—
Let the wicked beware of me.

"There are seven pearls in yonder tower,
Their number soon shall wane;
There are seven flowers in fair Scotland
I'll pu' them ane by ane.

"And the wee'st bird in a' the bower
Shall be the last that's taen;
The laird of Blain hath seven daughters
But soon he shall have nane.

"I'll bathe them all in the living stream
Thro' fairyland that flows;
And I'll seek the bowers of Paradise
For the bonniest flower that grows.

"And I'll distil it in the dew
  That falls on the hills of Heaven ;
And the hue that lovely angels wear
  Shall to those maids be given.

"And I'll try how comely and how fair
  Their forms may be to see,
And I'll try how pure the maidens' mind
  In this ill world may be.

"The day may dawn and the darkness fly,
  And truth her wings expand ;
But none shall blame when I am gone
  The Queen of the fairyland."

The laird of Blain he walks the wood
  But he walks it all alone ;
The laird of Blain had seven daughters,
  But now he hath not one.

They never were on death-bed laid,
  But they vanished all away ;
He lost his babies one by one
  Between the night and day.

He wist not what to do or say,
  Or what did him beseem
And he wandered through the weary world
  Like one that's in a dream.

Yet still his faith was firm and sure,
  And his trust in Heaven still ;
He hoped to meet them all again
  Beyond the reach of ill.

When seven long years and seven long days
  Had slowly come and gone,
He walked out thro' the good green wood,
  But he walked it all alone.

He thought of his lost family,
And he kneeled him down to pray ;
But he was so moved to tenderness
That a word he could not say.

He looked out o'er his left shoulder
To see what he might see,
There he beheld seven bonny maids
Coming tripping o'er the lea.

Such beauty eye had never seen,
And never again shall see ;
Such lovely forms of flesh and blood
On earth can never be.

The joy that beamed in every eye
Was like the rising sun,
And the whited blossoms of the wood
Besides their forms were dun.

There was a wreath on every head,
On every bosom two ;
And the fairest flowers the world e'er saw
Was nodding o'er the brow.

But ceasè your strain my good old harp
O cease and sing no more ;
If you should of that meeting tell,
O I might rue it sore.

There would no eye in fair Scotland
Nor rosy cheek be dry,
The laverock would forget her song,
And drop dead from the sky.

And the daisy would no more be white,
And the lily would change her hue ;
For the blood drops would fall from the moon
And redden the morning dew.

But when I tell you out my tale,
  Full plainly you will see,
That where there is no sin nor shame
  No sorrow there can be.

The following letter from Mr. John Murray of Albemarle Street is interesting, treating, as it does, of two such famous men as Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott, and their introduction to one another.

One passage has reference, we presume, to "The Poetic Mirror," of which we have just made mention.

"London, April, 10, 1815.

"My Dear Friend,

"I entreat you not to ascribe to inattention, the delay which has occurred in my answer to your kind and interesting letter. Much more, I beg you not to entertain for a moment a doubt about the interest which I take in your writings, or the exertions which I shall ever make to promote their sale and popularity. I can express no words of praise equal to my estimation of the 'Queen's Wake,' which is, I believe, not less admired by all who have read it."

[Here follows a statement of sales of "Queen's Wake," and "Pilgrims of the Sun."]

"They are each selling every day, and I have no doubt that they will both be out of print in two months. It is really no less absurd than malicious, to suppose that I do not advertise, and by every other means strive to sell these works, in which I am so much interested.

"Respecting the collection of poems, I really think Lord Byron may, in a little time, most certainly be relied upon as a contributor. He continues to be exceedingly friendly to you in all respects; and it will be reciprocity of kindness in you to make large allowance for such a man. Newly married—consider the entire alteration which it has occasioned in his habits and occupations, and the flood of distracting engagements and duties of all kinds which have attended it. He is just come to town, and is in every respect, I think, very greatly improved. I wish you had been with me on Friday last, when I had the honour of presenting Scott to him for the first time. This I consider as a commemorative event in literary history, and I sincerely regret that you were not present. I wish you had dash'd up to London at once, and if you will do so immediately, I will undertake to board you, if you will get a bed, which can easily be obtained in my neighbourhood, and everybody will be glad to see you.

"Could you not write a poetical epistle, a lively one, to Lady Byron, congratulating her on her marriage? She is a good mathematician, writes poetry, understands French, Italian, Latin, and Greek—and tell her that, as she has prevented Lord B. from fulfilling his promise to you, she is bound to insist upon its execution; and to add a poem of her own to it, by way of interest. She is a most delightful creature, and possesses excellent temper and a most inordinate share of good sense.

"Scott and Byron met here again on Saturday, and spoke a great deal about you, and anxiously wished that you had come to London. . . . . Scott talks of remaining a month.

"I have forgotten to tell you that Gifford tells me that he would receive with every disposition to favour it, any critique which you like to send of new Scotch works. And if I had been aware of it in time, I certainly would have invited your remarks on 'Mannering.' Our article is not good, and our praise is by no means adequate, I allow, but I suspect you very greatly overrate the novel. 'Meg Merilees' is worthy of Shakespeare, but all the rest of the novel might have been written by Scott's brother, or any other body. Adieu for the present; pray write me immediately to tell me that you forgive my silence, and believe me, with the highest esteem for your genius, my dear sir,—Your faithful friend,

"JNO. MURRAY.

"Mr. JAMES HOGG."

In the summer of 1814 when making a tour in the Highlands, Hogg caught a severe cold. He remained till convalescent at Kinnaird house in Athole, the seat of Mr. Chalmers Izett. Mrs. Izett took a great interest in the poet, and entertained a high opinion of his genius.

During his residence at Kinnaird, Mrs. Izett one morning proposed that he should write something to "prevent his mind from rusting." The poet was not the man to flinch when thus put on his mettle, and the result was "Mador of the Moor." The plot of this poem has been considered as deficient in interest, but it contains much beautiful poetry, and shows descriptive power of a very high order. Soon after its publication, Hogg received the following letter from the Duke of Buccleuch, to whom he had sent a copy.

"Penrith, May 7, 1816.

"Sir,

"I return you my thanks for your present of 'Mador of the Moor.' This poem has gratified and amused me much. I do not pretend to be a critic, or judge of poetry in proportion to the interest it creates in me. I shall therefore only add that 'Mador' shall be immediately re-read as soon as the different individuals of my family shall have perused it, a period at no great distance.

"Your friend and well-wisher,

"BUCCLEUCH, &c."

His experience as editor of the *Spy*, had given Hogg a readiness in a certain kind of writing, and he was naturally led to consider whether some other literary venture of the magazine kind might be tried. Among those whom he consulted on the subject was Mr. Blackwood, who also happened to have a similar design in view, and so it came about that Hogg was one of the chief promoters of *Blackwood's Magazine*, of which the first number appeared in April 1817. The position which that magazine soon attained, and has so long occupied, is well known. Among his contributions to it, was the "Chaldee Manuscript," of which there is no doubt that he wrote the first draft. Indeed, part of the original MS. is still in the possession of his family; but how much of that very singular production was entirely Hogg's, can never now be known. We incline to think that some of the more irreverent passages were not his, or were at all events largely added to by others before publication. He continued to be a contributor to *Maga* with some intervals to the end of his life, and this added considerably to his income.

Hitherto the Ettrick Shepherd had confined himself mainly to works of imagination. In addition to the poems which had made him famous, many prose tales and sketches had proceeded from his pen, which were to be found in the various annuals and periodicals of the period. Principal among the prose tales was "The Brownie of Bodsbeck," published about 1816, which soon became deservedly and permanently popular.

In 1819 a work of an entirely different character was commenced. This was "The Jacobite Relics; a collection of songs, ballads, and other Jacobite literature, with copious notes by James Hogg."

The first suggestion of such a collection emanated from the Duke of Sussex, and Hogg was eventually selected to carry out the proposal. The book appeared in 1819, in two volumes, and met with approbation. It had been a labour of love on the Shepherd's part, who delighted in all old ballad lore; and the work proved also in some degree profitable. "The Jacobite Relics," although meeting with some disapprobation at the time, has retained its popularity, and is almost the only standard work on the subject. It was out of print until a few years ago, when an enterprising provincial bookseller * brought out a new edition.

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* Mr. Gardner, Paisley.

CHAPTER VI.

1816-1820.

THE shepherd was now at Eltrive. Here he had now reared a nice dwelling—modest still, but neat and picturesque, and with refined surroundings. His tastes, too, had developed in the same direction, and hospitable instincts pervaded his whole nature. Of these instincts full advantage was taken, for to the poet's cottage flowed a constant stream of visitors of every degree, and from all quarters. But his domestic appliances were still of the simplest nature, presided over by a country maiden, whose rusticity must often have amused some of his more fastidious guests.

Eltrive, it was evident, sadly needed a mistress. The poet needed a wife. Nor was "favour wi' wooin' fashious to seek." In the course of his forty years there had, no doubt, been love passages in his life, as in other lives. And during the last ten years some of those who wished him well had "looked out" at various times "a suitable wife" for the Ettrick Shepherd. But none of the ladies selected had been the one on whom his affections or his hopes were fixed.

One of Hogg's most intimate and interested friends in Edinburgh was Mr. Gray, of whom mention is frequently made in Hogg's own account of his life. Mr. Gray was at that time one of the classical masters in the High School, to which he had been promoted from the Grammar School of Dumfries in 1801. While resident there he had been the friend of Burns, and at the great bard's decease, had taken his part against his detractors, when evil things were spoken of the life and habits of the dead poet.

James Gray was a man of letters, and himself no mean poet, while his home was the constant resort of the leading literary people in the metropolis. His second wife was Miss Peacock, a lady of accomplished literary tastes, who seconded her husband in every scheme to encourage men of letters; whether those already distinguished, or those struggling to make a position. In the latter class was James Hogg in 1810, and he had no kinder friends than Mr. and Mrs. Gray.

Mr. Gray, while quite a young man, teaching the Grammar School in Dumfries, had married Mary Phillips, the eldest daughter of Mr. Peter Phillips, tenant of the farm of Longbridgemoor, in Annandale. The family of Phillips belonged to the respectable farmer class. The first of the name settled in the district was John Phillips, who had come there as factor to Grierson of Lagg or Rockhall. Probably Peter Phillips of Longbridgemoor was great-grandson to the first settler in Annandale. Be that as it may, for the archives of the family do not go far back, he was tenant of Longbridgemoor, an extensive farm, and was a person of considerable wealth and importance in the locality. He took for a wife Janet Carruthers, the daughter of a farmer in the adjoining parish of Mousewald, but come of an ancient and honourable stock. We have heard the legend that the first of the name accompanied one of our early Scottish Kings from France. On the voyage, the vessel being overtaken in a violent storm, this foreigner distinguished himself with so much skill at the helm that he was called "John ca' the rudder," hence the surname Carruthers. This, however, does not appear to have been the true origin of Carruthers in Dumfriesshire. Like most other myths, it is simply a vulgar play on the name. This is no doubt derived from the British fort "Caer-rhythyr," which stood on a height above the ancient hamlet of Carruthers—meaning "the post of the assault."

As early as 1306, John de Carruthers received from Robert Bruce a charter of the lands of Mousewald. Then there was also Sir Simon Carruthers, a man of note, who figured in early Scottish history. His remains lie buried in Mousewald churchyard. Janet, who in the middle of the 18th century married Peter Phillips of Longbridgemoor, was descended from the Carruthers of Mousewald. A certain refinement has characterized her descendants, which may perhaps be due to the ancient blood of de Carruthers, which she has transmitted to them. Her daughter Mary, who married Mr. Gray, was a pretty fragile woman, who after the birth of her eighth child died in 1806. She had been the eldest of a numerous family—ten in number—the youngest being Margaret, who was only a child at the time of her sister's marriage.

Later, however, when Margaret grew up, she spent much of her time in Edinburgh, at the house of her brother-in-law, Mr. Gray, some of whose sons were only a few years younger than herself. With Mrs. Gray, the young aunt of her step-children was an especial favourite, and well she might be, for she was bright, sensible, and modest.

Margaret had already admirers, both in Edinburgh and in her native Dumfriesshire, where she was an acknowledged belle in her own sphere, and wounded more hearts than she cared to tell. The maiden turned a deaf ear, however, to her many suitors, for whilst in Edinburgh she had met in the house of Mr. Gray one whom she fancied she would prefer before all the rest, if only circumstances would permit this seemingly misplaced preference to ripen into a warmer feeling; but Margaret was prudent, and kept her own counsel in the meantime. The man she liked best was James Hogg, the middle-aged, struggling poet: and the attraction was reciprocal. Ten years passed, but her image was still before him, his poet's heart finding utterance in this little poem, of which she was the theme:—

"MISCHIEVOUS WOMAN.

"Could this old world have been contrived
  To stand without mischievous woman,
How peaceful bodies might have lived,
  Released from a' the ills sae common.
But since it is the waefu' case
  That men maun hae this teasing crony,
Why sic a sweet bewitching face?
  Oh had she no been made sae bonnie!

I might hae roamed with cheerfu' mind,
  Nae sin nor sorrow to betide me,
As careless as the wandering wind,
  As happy as the lamb beside me;
I might hae screwed my tunefu' pegs
  And caroll'd mountain airs so gaily,
Had we but wantit a' the Megs,
  Wi' glassy e'en sae dark and wily.

I saw the danger, feared the dart,
  The smile, the air, and a' sae taking,
Yet open laid my witless heart,
  And gat the wound that keeps me waking.
My harp waves on the willow green,
  O' wild witch notes it hasna ony,
Sin e'er I saw the pawky queen,
  Sae sweet, sae wicked, and sae bonny."

Margaret remained true to her poet, who in these ten years had become famous. He was no longer unknown; no longer without a home to offer the lady of his love. So, in April of 1820, Hogg went to Dumfries-shire, and in the old mansion house of Mousewald Place, where Mr. Phillips, having retired from business, was then residing, was married to his Margaret. Notwithstanding what appeared its many discrepancies, the union was a singularly happy one, for as maiden, wife, and mother, Margaret Phillips was ever well beloved.

The following letter belongs to this period.

To the Rev. Robert Russell, minister of Yarrow.

"Eltrive Lake, May 5th, 1820.

"Rev. Sir,

It was my sincere wish that my partner and I should have been united by you, there being no divine in our Church for whom I have ever had such a sincere regard and unchanged esteem. But I found that, owing to the distance of our places of residence, my scheme was impracticable. I had, however, in the view of it, ordered you out the best hat the city could afford, and I beg that you will still accept of it, as a small testimony of my affection and esteem for your friendship.

"We would be happy if you and any of the ladies would honour us with a call as soon as convenient, and if you would dine and spend the afternoon, so much the better.

"Yours ever most respectfully,

"JAMES HOGG."

The foregoing note refers to a custom, now almost out of fashion, but which in the earlier part of this century was all but universal, when the social standing of the bridegroom was above that of the working class. We mean the present of a hat to the officiating clergyman.

The late Dr. Henry Duncan, who was minister of Ruthwell, and known as the founder of "Savings Banks," was, we believe, the clergyman who performed the marriage ceremony. He had been the pastor, as well as the family friend of the Phillips, and his sister Christian had lately become the wife of Mrs. Hogg's brother, Mr. Walter Phillips, for long resident at Comlongon Castle, the Dumfriesshire seat of the Earl of Mansfield, for whom he acted as factor.

Love letters are only meant for two pairs of eyes, but we steal a glimpse into one or two of the Shepherd's. It is touching to unfold the old yellow letters written seventy years ago, and to think how carefully they have been kept and guarded all these years. But the two pairs of eyes are long since lying closed for ever; and we may therefore tell what James Hogg wrote to Margaret Phillips in 1812:— . . . "You blame me for jealousy, and for not writing seriously to you. What would you have me to say, Margaret? I am sure if this letter be any kinder than the last you will not believe it. . . . But I will try to write two lines of truth for once, a thing rather uncommon with poets you know."

Then follows a declaration of love which he knows "from this circumstance that when you were here there was no other person whom I liked better to see; and now when you are gone, there is no other person whom I would so fain see again. I dare not say any more truth at present. . . . As your brother will inform you I am well, never was better, or merrier. Sometimes rhyming, sometimes prosing, and sometimes traversing the country. J. H."

And in November of 1812, he writes, after some playful badinage :—

> "I have had some remarkably fine tours this year, both in the Highlands and in England, and fell acquainted with some very fine ladies, but as soon as I got from them, the black-eyed Nithsdale lassie was always uppermost in my mind. I am going on in the old round, writing verses, speaking in the 'forum,' of which I am secretary this year, with a salary of £20,"—(an interesting piece of information this)—"attending the theatre, arguing with the Blue-stocking Club, and drinking whisky." . . . "I have made a very good bargain about the 'Queen's Wake,' and will likewise have a little more money this year than I am wont to have: but it will soon go for want of one to take care of it. . . . Let me hear from you, the oftener the more welcome. I do not know what I would give to see you again. J. H."

Poor Poet! £20 a year, and such hopes, aspirations, and longings.

Then again in 1818, he writes :—

> "My mind is quite fixed and immovable.

I might perhaps get a better wife and a richer wife, but I find I could not get one I like so well, or that would suit me better, therefore I am determined that no failure or shortcoming shall take place on my part. Yet I confess to you that ever since you took the resolution of going home to Nithsdale and leaving me, I have had a kind of prepossession that some obstacle would come in the way to prevent our union; and I expect that this obstacle will arise with your friends. I am so convinced of it that I have a jealousy of every one of them."

Again in 1819, September, he writes in these terms, for there seems to be always an undercurrent of doubt as to his acceptability to the lady's friends, and our poet is hasty and testy, sometimes disposed to blame Margaret:—

"I am vexed that you have never broken the ice for me, for I hoped to be at your side by this time, and not very sure that I shall not be so in a few days. . . Would to Heaven that this mentioning of matters and making of treaties was over. My heart recoils from it more than from any thing I ever set about. Tell Walter [her brother] that I'll give him twenty guineas (a matter of some concern to a farmer when grain is so cheap), if he will just bring you over and set you down at my side, and make me free of all the rest of it, save taking you by the hand and making a short awkward bow to the minister, for as to pulling off gloves, you know I never wear any."

This did very well in theory; but in practice things must be gone about in the usual form. The marriage, after all, did not take place at that time, not till spring of the following year. As the time approaches, the letters of the lovers treat of all the little details of business in a sensible unpoetic kind of way, down to his idea of what his bride should wear. This is what Hogg wished his wife to go to the altar in:—

"What is to be your bridal dress? I know what I would choose, but do not let that disarrange any of your measures. I would have you dressed in white muslin, with a white satin Highland bonnet with white plumes and veil. I think this a highly becoming dress, and, moreover, a convenient one, for I see that married country ladies wear such bonnets at table, instead of caps, when visiting. I must trust to you for a few gloves, favours, and such trifles, which I neither know, nor care ought about. Farewell, dearest Maggie, till I see you. Keep a good heart: the braes of Yarrow will soon be very wildly bonny, and every one here is wearying to see you; but scarcely one yet believes you are coming."

Margaret, in postscript to her next letter, says, we suppose ironically, "I admire your taste in dress!"

Something approaching a lover's quarrel seems to have taken place in August, 1819, for the hot-tempered Shepherd writes in high dudgeon from Edinburgh:—

"Your anxiously looked for letter has given me but little satisfaction. I knew what it would be when you got home among your friends, and often foretold you of it. And now I see I am too right. The mighty objection that you dwell upon must be obvious to every one, and it would not have been fair to the woman of my heart not to have given a true picture both of my present circumstances and future prospects. If it had not been for paying off old debts with interest . . . and building a new cottage, I would have had a good deal of money before my hand; as it is, I have none. It is all a pretence your saying that my letter bore marks of my having changed my mind. As far as I remember, it was as affectionate a letter as ever was written—certain I am, it was meant to be so.

"My mind is made up, but my heart will not suffer any insult; and if I see the least symptoms of dislike among your friends, and that they are influencing you against me, I am off in a moment. I think too much of myself to truckle or cringe to man that is born of woman, or to woman either. . . . Your objection cannot be removed in a day nor a year. But I find I am in bad humour to-day, and ought not to have written. It is your letter that has made me so. . . .

"You must not be angry at poor Mrs. Gray. I think she acted imprudently, but still she loves you, and the thing cannot be amended; but there is not a woman loves her sister or child better than she loves you."

In December 1819 he writes from Eltrive Lake—

"I see your letter is of an old date, and yet it is several days since I got it; but at this season I am quite secluded almost from the possibility of communication with this world, it being only by chance that I get my letters at all; and I do not even know if I shall get this away to the post without sending *once errand*.

"I certainly join you in deep concern about your worthy father's health in particular, and shall weary to hear from you, how he is as well as your sister, for I have had many perplexing dreams about you all : and that night before I got your letter, which was on Saturday last, I had such a dream of distress as I never experienced. It was all about your family, and terminated at an old church among graves, and gravestones and strangers. But why should I frighten my dearest Margaret by the vagaries of such a visionary as I am, only the circumstance has made me uneasy and I cannot help it.

"It was never in view of receiving a fortune with you that induced me to pay my addresses to you, Margaret. On the contrary, you know that I declined an independent fortune that was mine for the taking for your sake, and that it was pure affection made me proffer you my hand. I had no doubt that your father had the same affection for you that he has for the rest of his family, and judging from my own feelings, perhaps I thought he might have more. Whatever portion, therefore, he thinks proper to give or bequeath to you, with that I have made up my mind to be satisfied, and grateful both to him and to his memory. But having no fortune of my own to bestow on you, I would scorn to enter into conditions for the woman I loved."

We suspect the spirits of the poet had been affected by the solitariness of his winter home.

On November 16, 1819, he tells his lady-love,

"I returned only yesterday from a long visit to Kelso, and the beautiful scenery around it. How unlike your abominable country. Among other places I was three whole days and nights at Fleurs Castle with the Duke and Duchess of Roxburgh, where the attentions shown to me were enough to put a wise man mad. I met Mr. Walter Scott there, and returned by Abbotsford with him, where I remained three days more. But this is all foreign to the purport of my writing, were it not to account for my delay in answering your very kind and very sensible letter.

"I am far from thinking you did wrong in what you communicated to your father. A parent is always a sure confidant. Indeed, I have always thought that a young lady who receives the addresses of a lover out of her father's knowledge, or without his approbation, had better not receive them at all. Therefore you did what was highly proper at all events. . . . I could not cherish a hope of losing you, but some things that you said to me set me a thinking, and that very seriously, and I am not yet convinced of the prudence of our marriage, considering my years and the uncertain state in which I hang as it were between poverty and riches. For God's sake consult further with your father, for I have no one to consult on the subject, and have got some very urgent remonstrances against it. Indeed, your father is the only man whom I would consult, knowing that he has your happiness at heart, and would, I am sure, advise what he judges best. I have very much need of you just now, for my housekeeper, a valuable honest woman, refuses to stay."

We cannot wonder he should resent this treatment of one of his love letters. On March 14, 1820, he writes:—

"I am not going to write any more letters to you; for all that I write is meant only for your private eye. I sent a letter to Dumfries fair, which three of my friends in company delivered to your father. Without any ceremony he put on his spectacles, set his back to the wall, broke open my letter, and read it from end to end. Now, I do not care much for this, as I daresay I would not make any proposals to his daughter that were dishonourable; but [done], as it was, before my neighbours, I could not help taking it as a manifest insult."

The "insult," as he chooses to term the inadvertency of his future father-in-law, was speedily forgotten, as the marriage took place very soon afterwards, and we hear no more of any want of confidence on either side. As the happy time draws nigh, the man seems to triumph over the poet, for we find Hogg is most minute in his directions about domestic and matrimonial matters:—"There is no such thing as crying * three times in one day in this country. I thought since the last act regarding marriages, that it had not been legal; but if you have any delicacy in making it so soon public, make your father or Walter show the clerk my letter, and speak to him, which is quite sufficient; only be sure it be not later than the 23rd, that the two may correspond. . . .

"You should surely have one female friend to come with you for a week or two. I should prefer one of your nieces, with whom we could be free occasionally with regard to accommodation." He tells her also in the same letter that "there is a large and elegant mirror already, and we will settle when you come home what else we need."

We almost regret that the happy event, about

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* Proclamation of banns.

which so much has been written, and about the prudence of which there were not a few misgivings, should have closed for us the series of letters which, more than any other, show us much of the generous, true-hearted, testy, and yet shrewd character of the poet.

CHAPTER VII.

1821-1830.

The Shepherd was many, perhaps twenty, years older than his wife, but, notwithstanding disparity in age, and in social position, the union proved a singularly happy one.

The following letter from Sir Walter Scott refers to the event :—

"Dear Hogg,

"I have the pleasure to pay you my best and most sincere congratulations on your change of condition, which I have no doubt will add materially to your happiness, for to men of your real good temper of mind, there is no society like that of one's own family. I have just lost, however, in a pleasant way one of the most agreeable parts of my society, or as Joanna Baillie says,

'The flower and blossom of my house,
The wind has blown away to other towers.'

But I am to consider on the other hand the value of the acquaintance I have made in a man of Lockhart's worth, honour, and talents.

"I did not forget your matters in London, and I hope I left them in a fine train. Lord Montague made me no promise, but I sincerely believe he has a wish to serve you, and I trust you will be accommodated next year with a Yarrow grazing. In the meanwhile follow Iago's rule, "put money in thy purse." A farm without a reasonable capital is a horse without a bridle, on the which a man is more likely to break his neck than to make his fortune.

"I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Hogg, and am, with sincere good wishes,

"Very truly yours,

"WALTER SCOTT.

"30 April, Edinr."

The following letter from Hogg, is to his father-in-law, written a few months after his marriage.

"Eltrive, August 3rd, 1820.

"My Dear Sir,

"I was mightily amused with your facetious account of your journey home, and I assure you laughed most heartily at it, and should have answered your kind letter ere now, but in reality I had nothing to tell you, nor would I have put you to the expense of a letter even now had it not been as an inducement to let me hear from you again. You cannot imagine how my Margaret longs for a letter from *home*, as she calls it, or with what emotions she opens it. . . .

"We are all in excellent good health, and as happy and cheerful as you left us. We two have been jaunting a little since that time. We spent three days visiting in Ettrick, and among other places were a night with the Hon. Captain Napier and his lady in Thirlestane Castle, with which attention Margaret was much pleased.

"We have likewise been at Selkirk, Newark, etc., and also at Traquair, and purpose in a few days to be at Abbotsford, Melrose, Dryborough, etc., . . I have four 'bughts' to sell at Thirlestane fair and must wait on it. All the markets in this country have been good for everything, even wool. My own —— is very good now. We have part of our hay cut, but none of it up; it is a fine crop. . . . I have had some correspondence of late with the chamberlain of Buccleuch. It is likely that I am to get the offer of one of the best and the very cheapest farms on the estate, only I fear it is too large. . . .

I have only to say that Bob is so much a favourite with my wife for his steadiness, that I am persuaded she will not like to part with him, if you let us have him reasonable.

"Your affectionate and dutiful son,

"JAMES HOGG."

These letters let us get a glimpse into the home-life at Eltrive. The advent of Mrs. Hogg, without doubt, effected some changes in the simple domestic economy there, and the poet's wife soon proved herself justly a favourite with the poet's friends.

There being few or no carriage roads in Ettrick and Yarrow, Mr. and Mrs. Hogg made their journeys on horseback. The lady was a practised and good horsewoman, and "Bob," alluded to in the above letter, was no doubt a pony lent by her father for her use. Probably it was regarding Bob's tricks that Mrs. Hogg received the following:—

"Captain Napier presents his compliments to Mrs. Hogg, and begs her acceptance of the *bit*, which he forgot to send by the last opportunity. If such a contrivance will not keep up the pony's head, Mrs. H. had better not confide her person to such an animal.

"Saturday morning. Thirlestane."

The following, addressed by Hogg to his friend Mr. John Grieve, alludes to a rather unusual episode in the life of a man fifty years of age.

"Altrive Lake, Oct. 3, 1820.

"My Dear Grieve,

"I have been very ill since I saw you, having been seized with the measles that night. Indeed, they must have been hanging on me for some time before, for they made their appearance next morning. I am not like to get very easily quit of them, they are as bright over my whole body as ever, though they have been out eight days, which is quite a phenomenon in the distemper. I suppose my skin is too tough for them either to get out, or in again when they are out, for at my age the disease is quite ridiculous.

. . . .

I have been assailed from all quarters with the treatment of *Blackwood.* There is surely something in it more than I can see, for it appears to me to be a joke, an even-down quiz without much ill meaning. . . . Among twenty others I had a letter on the subject, from whom think you? You will never guess. From Caddell in a most friendly style, wishing me to support old *Maggy*, promising equal if not better pay than *Blackwood.* . . .

I wrote to my Margaret of the great and extraordinary hubbub that took place at Cacrabank with the Grays, but I have left her over to you for the full description of the scene. You must think of some of the traits of character in your best Matthews manner.—Dear Grieve,

"Yours ever most affectionately,
"JAMES HOGG."

One passage in this letter may have reference to something in the "Noctes Ambrosianæ." The fame of the "Noctes" is world wide, and, as Professor Ferrier remarks in his preface to Professor Wilson's works, "The animating spirit of the 'Noctes Ambrosianæ' is the Ettrick Shepherd himself."

"There was a homely heartiness of manner about Hogg and a Doric simplicity in his address, which was exceedingly prepossessing. He sometimes carried a little too far the privileges of an innocent rusticity, as Mr. Lockhart has not failed to note* in his life of Scott; but, in general his slight deviations from etiquette were rather amusing than otherwise. When we consider the disadvantages with which he had to contend, it must be admitted that Hogg was in all respects a very remarkable man. In his social hours, a naïvete, and a vanity which disarmed displeasure by the openness and good-humour with which it was avowed, played over the surface of a nature which at bottom was sufficiently shrewd and sagacious; but his conversational powers were by no means pre-eminent. He never indeed attempted any colloquial display, although there was sometimes a quaintness in his remarks, a glimmering of drollery, a rural freshness, and a tinge of poetical colouring, which redeemed his discourse from commonplace, and supplied to the consummate artist who took him in hand the hints out of which to construct a character at once original, extraordinary, and delightful—a character of which James Hogg undoubtedly furnished the germ, but which, as it expanded under the hands of its artificer, acquired a breadth, a firmness and a power to which the bard of Mount Benger had certainly no pretension." *

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* With uncalled for malignity.—ED.

No, the Shepherd of the "Noctes" was not the Shepherd of Mount Benger and Eltrive Lake. The Socrates-like wisdom and the Falstaffian humour there depicted were very unlike the homely common-sense and mother wit of the Ettrick Shepherd. The finely turned sentences and elegant criticisms on men and books, poetry and prose, were not the least like the genial remarks of the simple-minded author of "Kilmeny." Least of all was the bombastic, gor-

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* Preface to edition of "Noctes Amb."

mandizing, deep-drinking Hogg of Ambrose's parlour, the devoted husband and father, the kind master and friend of Mount Benger.

The Shepherd that the world was introduced to in the "Noctes" was not the Shepherd his own home knew. Possibly there was no unkindness meant in thus depicting him, and Hogg was willing to admit this. But many of his friends thought the "Noctes" went too far, and incited him to resentment. We here insert an interesting letter from Sir Walter Scott to the shepherd. The letter is unfortunately without a date, but was doubtless written in reference to this or some kindred annoyance, and is full of wise and most friendly advice.

"My dear Hogg,

"I am very sorry to observe from the tenor of your letter that you have permitted the caricature in *Blackwood's Magazine*, to sit so near your feelings, though I am not surprised that it should have given pain to Mrs. Hogg. Amends, or if you please revenge, is the natural wish of human nature, when it receives these sort of provocations, but in general it cannot be gratified without entailing much worse consequences than could possibly flow from the first injury. No human being who has common sense can possibly think otherwise of you, than he did before after reading all the tirade of extravagant ridicule with which the article is filled. It is plain to me that the writer of the article neither thought of you as he has expressed himself, nor expected or desired the reader to do so. He only wished to give you momentary pain, and were I you, I would not let him see that in this he has succeeded. To answer such an article seriously, would be fighting with a shadow and throwing stones at moonshine. If a man says that I am guilty of some particular fact, I would vindicate myself if I could—but if he caricatures my person and depreciates my talents, I would content myself with thinking that the world will judge of my exterior and of my powers of composition by the evidence of their own eyes, and of my works. I cannot as a lawyer and a friend advise you to go to law. A defence would be certainly set up upon the Chaldee manuscript, and upon many passages in your own account of your own life, and your complaint of personality would be met with the proverb, that "he who plays at bowls must meat with rubbers." As to knocking out of brains, that is talking *no how;* if you would knock any brains into a bookseller you would have my consent, but not to knock out any part of the portion with which Heaven has endowed them.

I know the advice to be quiet under injury is hard to flesh and blood. But nevertheless I give it under the firmest conviction that it is the best for your peace, happiness and credit. The public has shown their full sense of your original genius, and I think this unjust aggression and extravagant affectation of depreciating you, will make no impression upon their feelings. I would also distrust the opinion of those friends who urge you to hostilities. They may be over zealous in your behalf, and overlook the preservation of your ease and your comfort, like the brewer's man who pushed his guest into the boiling vat that he might be sure to give him drink enough, or, they may be a little malicious, and have no objection (either from personal motives or for the mere fun's sake), to egg on and encourage a quarrel. In all the literary quarrels of my time, and I have seen many, I remember none in which both parties did not come off with injured peace of mind and diminished reputation. It is as if a decent man was seen boxing in the street.

" It is, therefore, my earnest advice to you to look on the whole matter with contempt ; and never in one way or other take any notice of it. [Goldie's publication might with some people have a bad effect, because he certainly had reason to complain.] But this absurd piece of extravagance can have none—it leaves you, in every respect, the same James Hogg it found you, or if otherwise, it arms in your favour those generous feelings which revolt at seeing your parts and talents made the subject of ill-natured ridicule.

"I am sure I feel for Mrs. Hogg on the occasion, because as an affectionate wife, I am sure she must feel hurt and angry on your behalf. But then she must as a woman of sense reconcile herself to the course most favourable to your peace of mind, your private fortune, and the safety of your person.

. . . . . .

But if you come here agreeable to what is requested in the enclosed we will be most heartily glad to see you, and will consider what can be done in that part of the matter.

"I have only to add that I myself, in similar circumstances, should take no notice of any piece of scurrilous raillery which appeared anonymously in periodical publications, and that I should conceive my honour much more hurt in descending to such a contest than in neglecting or contemning the injury.

"Yours very truly,

"W. Scott.

"Abbotsford. Saturday."

Among others, Mrs. Hogg felt deeply hurt at these representations, and although her husband used to peruse them with merry laughter as each new number of *Maga* made its appearance, her heart used to quicken its beat, and her gentle spirit was wounded, because her kind husband was, to her thinking, turned into heartless ridicule in these horrid "Noctes." Occasionally and wisely she refused to read them.

Mrs. Hogg survived her husband for the long period of five-and-thirty years, but to the last day of her gentle life the recollection of the "Noctes" of that period brought back to her mind the *bête noir* that had made her pulse beat faster and her eye sparkle with a wife's indignation. Was she wrong; or did it happen that the world, being wiser than she, detected the conceit and saw through the mask? Doing so they would know that the "Shepherd" of the "Noctes" was, after all, but a creation of the wild and somewhat jovial fancy of Christopher North, having little or no real existence.

Speaking of Professor Wilson, whom he loved, Hogg says—"My friends in general have been of opinion that he amused himself and the public too often at my expense, but except in one instance, which terminated very ill for me, and in which I had no more concern than the man in the moon, I never discovered any evil design on his part, and thought it all excellent sport. At the same time I must acknowledge that it was using too much freedom with any author to print his name in full to poems, letters, and essays, which he himself never saw. I do not say that he has done this; but either he, or some one else, has done it many a time."* A contemporary of the Shepherd says, "It must be confessed that no justification can be offered for such treatment. Such was my own opinion, derived from this source, of Hogg. . . . On meeting him in London I was quite amazed to find him so smooth, well-looking, and gentlemanly a sort of person."

In a correspondence about another matter, Lockhart, who was one of the chief promoters and joint authors of the "Noctes," remarked to Hogg, "I am of opinion that your name should no more appear in Blackwood's 'Noctes,' and have taken the liberty of saying so to the Bailie (than whom I do not think you have a warmer friend in the world), for the chief patronage of that society* is in the hands of Bishops and the like grave personages, who are very apt to disapprove of a candidate represented, however ridiculously, as a toping companion of such characters as Mr. O'Doherty. Be sure—I am sure—that the moment a hint is given that you may be injured, such liberties will for ever cease." And again—"May I hint that you should never allude to the 'Noctes:' do not seem to fancy it possible that anybody should have attached the slightest or most momentary importance to such things. J. G. L." Probably nobody did attach much importance to the fictional character of the Shepherd in the "Noctes" at that period; but unhappily, the character acquired there, although confessedly so untrue, has adhered to the memory of the victim. A race has arisen "who knew not Joseph," and how is that race to know that the Shepherd of the "Noctes" is a myth? Eventually this vexed and vexing matter led to serious estrangement with the managers of *Maga*, an estrangement which was of short duration as regards Professor Wilson; and which happily was also ended with the publisher before the Shepherd's death. Having said this much, we do not wish to touch further on the topics. *Requiescat in pace.*

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* Reminiscences of William Howitt.

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* The Royal Society of Literature.

A letter from J. G. Lockhart, son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott, may here be introduced.

"Dear Hogg,

"You have never answered my last epistle, but I have heard from Laidlaw of its arriving in safety at its destination. Poor Laidlaw has indeed been very ill, but he is now quite re-established. I found him yesterday still in his nightcap bothered equally, I take it, by the minister and the dancing master.

Mr. W. S. Rose has come down with Sir Walter. Ever since he came he has been crying about the Ettrick Shepherd and St. Mary's Lake. At last it has been so arranged that Sir Walter is to carry him and the ladies as far as Newark Castle on Monday, early; and that Rose and I are to come on pony-back as far as Eltrive Lake, and take a night's lodging from you and Mrs. Hogg. What say you to all this? If it be convenient for you to give Rose a bed don't give yourself any uneasiness about me or Mr. K——, alias the Wamba of the new forest. We should think nothing of going to Mrs. Brydone's, or anywhere in short except the potatoe field—for as to the barn, that we should like, as *Kinvies* would word it, hugely. That worthy, once sleeping in a beautiful house, chose to make his lair under the dresser, in the notion that neither ghost nor devil would stoop his back to come at him. He inscribed over his head on the timber:—

> Demon, goblin, dog or bitch—
> Sheeted ghost or friend in pitch—
> Be ye cock-tailed—be ye switch—
> Devils low or of renown,
> If ye stoop, ye'll crack yer crown.
> I defy you all.—'The Clown.'

If we hear nothing to the contrary, I think we shall therefore be pretty sure of seeing you and Mrs. H., not forgetting the little boy whom I have never seen, on Monday evening.

Sophia begs her best compts. to Mrs. H. and yourself.

"Yours truly,
"J. G. LOCKHART.

"Chiefswood, August 4th, 1821."

From the same (earlier).

"Dear Hogg,

"Sir Walter left us yesterday for London by the steamboat, regretting extremely that you were not there to accompany him. If you have occasion to write him soon, put your letter under cover to William Stewart Rose, Esq., Old Palace Yard, Westminster, with whom Sir W. is to stay. He desired me to write and tell you, what is not known generally, but is now quite certain, that the King is to be here in a few weeks hence, on his way back from Ireland. There must be a 'King's Wake' for certain, and you must clear forthwith your brawest pipes for the nonce. Your friend Sophia* goes to Chiefswood to-morrow, whither I shall follow her in eight days, being detained so long with the yeomanry. Sir W. and my brother William come down together after the coronation immediately, for the Ld. Advocate wants Scott's aid about arranging Holyrood, etc., for the King's reception. You will come to Edinr. when the King comes, and if you are so inclined, you shall have a bed at my house, whether we be or be not here ourselves. . . . By all means come to the coronation dinner and show your face.

The story of G—— made no more impression against you than the skip of a flea would on your hide. . . . Buonaparte's death has not made half such a noise as Johnny Ballantyne's. Did you hear of Johnnie having left a legacy of £2000 to

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* Mrs. Lockhart.

Sir Walter? I beg to be remembered most kindly to Mrs. Hogg, and remain always,

"Your affct. friend,
"J. G. Lockhart.

"25 Northumberland St., Edinr.,
"July 13. 1821."

The above letter has reference to a subject on which there was some misunderstanding at the time. As all the world knows, Sir Walter Scott went to London to take part in the coronation festivities when George the Fourth was crowned. The author of "Waverley" was desirous that the bard of the "Queen's Wake" should also be present, and had been at pains to procure a "place" to see the King. Sir Walter, moreover, ever kind and mindful of his less fortunate brother poet, had been designing great things for the Shepherd, whereby his worldly position was to be improved. Hogg, however, declined to accompany Sir Walter to London, much, as we see from the foregoing letter from the great novelist's son-in-law, to the disappointment of Sir Walter. In fact, he was somewhat inclined to blame the Shepherd for want of spirit on this occasion. But as we know, and as Sir Walter knew, Hogg's affairs were not in a prosperous condition. He has frequently been blamed, or at all events unfavourably commented on, for want of success as a farmer; but he was scarcely to blame that he did not at this time leave his business to chance, and incur what to him would have been the enormous expense of a visit to London. It might or it might not have been to the Shepherd's advantage to have gone, but at all events he was unable to see that it was his duty to go to London to see the king crowned, even at the earnest bidding of the mighty wizard of Abbotsford. And he was not the only poet who refrained from going to the coronation, for although living in London, Allan Cunningham did not attend the ceremony, and possibly economical reasons may not have been altogether absent in his case. He says "I saw Sir Walter again when he attended the coronation in 1821." "Well, Allan," he said, when he saw me at this last sitting 'were you at the coronation? it was a splendid sight.' 'No, Sir Walter,' I answered;

'places were dear and ill to get. I am told it was a magnificent scene; but having seen the procession of King Crispin at Dumfries, I was satisfied.' I said this with a smile. Scott took it as I meant it and laughed heartily.

Sour grape

"'That's not a bit better than Hogg,' he said. 'He stood balancing the matter whether to go to the coronation or the fair of Saint Boswell, and the fair carried it.'"

The Shepherd might have said as his friend the same Allan Cunningham wrote to him in 1826:—

> "We must live, and the white bread and the brown can only be obtained by gross payment. There is no poet and a wife and six children fed now like the prophet Elijah: they are more likely to be devoured by critics than fed by ravens. I cannot hope that Heaven will feed me and mine while I sing.
>
> "ALLAN CUNINGHAM."

The year following that on which George the Fourth was crowned, the monarch came on a visit to Scotland. Sir Walter Scott was, as might have been expected, the great dictator in the whole of the arrangements for rendering the visit of the King honourable and memorable. James Hogg was not behind his fellow-countrymen in showing his loyalty on this occasion. He produced for it, a drama called "The Royal Jubilee," which was presented to the gay monarch, and was duly acknowledged, an honour which seemed to satisfy the author. Sir Walter Scott wrote to him as follows:—

"My Dear Hogg,

"I ought to have forwarded the enclosed, which I received three or four days ago, but waited till Will Laidlaw went up Yarrow. I congratulate you on the compliment, which is always pleasant, even if nothing more should come of it. Mr. Peel is well acquainted with your writings, in evidence of which he bids me say he has scarce forgiven your selling an old bitch for three guineas. I did not remember the passage, but I excused you by saying that with us guineas were scarce, and bitches numerous.

"Yours truly,

"WALTER SCOTT.

"Abbotsford, Friday."

The enclosure here spoken of is the following :—

"Melville Castle,
"Edinburgh, Thursday Morning, Six o'Clock.

"My Dear Sir Walter,

"My last request to you is to beg you will return thanks to Mr. Hogg, in the King's name, for the gratifying proof of his genius and loyalty, which you have enabled me to offer to his majesty.

"Adieu, and believe me,

"Sincerely yours,
"Robert Peel.

"To Sir Walter Scott, Bart."

In politics, Hogg was always Conservative—a good sound Tory, like Sir Walter himself, and like the noble House of Buccleuch, on whose lands he lived. We annex a letter from Sir Walter in reference to the Pitt banquet.

"Dear Hogg,

"We are to have a grand meeting of the friends of Pitt and his doctrines, here on the 12th. The cock of the North (Marquis of Huntly) to be in the chair. The object is to make our musters and display in the same day with the

Whig dogs, who have invited down Lambton and Lord Grey, and we are in hopes to make them show like gilt twopences to us.

> For laws and lairds come here,
> And wow ! but they'll be crouse,
> Jamie.

Now, I have a ticket for your acceptance, and a commission from the committee of management to request that the author of 'Donald M'Donald' will favour us with his company. Do come if possible, and tune your pipes to a clever stave for the occasion. Lockhart's and mine are miserably out of tune, for Sophia has been dreadfully ill. She has been in bed for ten days with spasms much resembling mine. . . .

"Thank God, since yesterday she has been better, and lies calm, and slept a little, which is a great relief to us all. This unpleasant state of my poor girl has been the cause of my delaying this for some days, as I really had heart for nothing. But I am heartily interested in our weapon-shawing—for so it may be called—and pray you to come in to see a fine sight, and bear a gallant part in it. You know how our poor friend Duke Charles would have had this at heart.

"Yours truly,

"WALTER SCOTT.

"I send this to Mr. Laidlaw, requesting him to forward it."

CHAPTER VIII.

1821—1825.

NOT content with the good the gods had provided for him, the Shepherd unfortunately took a lease of a farm adjoining the little nook given him by the Duke of Buccleuch. Mount Benger was the name of the farm, and many of his pieces and compositions were written while living there, so that the name of the place became familiar to the readers of *Blackwood* and to the public. To it he removed a year or two subsequent to his marriage.

The misfortunes which had hitherto attended Hogg now descended also on his father-in-law, who had up to this time been a prosperous man. Mr. Phillips, in this not unlike his son-in-law, was singularly kind hearted and "aefauld;" and, owing a good deal to these qualities, he incurred severe losses, so severe as to result in his becoming all but bankrupt. These misfortunes, occurring just about the time of Hogg's taking possession of Mount Benger, caused, no doubt, great disappointment, and were indeed disastrous for the poet. In taking this new farm he had hoped for help from his wife's tocher. But all the dowry he received with Mrs. Hogg, lay in her good looks, good sense, and her many excellent qualities of head and heart. With these he was satisfied.

But meanwhile Mount Benger had to be stocked, and the Shepherd had been reckoning without his host. He writes to Mr. William Laidlaw on the subject :—

"Eltrive Lake, April 2nd, 1821.

"Dear Laidlaw,

"Jenny of Bowerhope, has just called and says she is coming to see you. I have not time to write, being engaged, but I wish very much to see you, and ask your advice about some things. I am like to lose the Mount Benger stock for want of security, and though conscious myself that I am a good enough merchant, I have not the face to ask any one to be caution for me for such a sum. . . .

"Owing to a most severe misfortune, I can hardly ask my father-in-law. This is between ourselves, but perhaps you have heard it, that he has lost five thousand pounds by the failure of one of his sons, exclusive of his losses with Mr. ——. Now I can stock it with lambs, horses, etc., without being obliged to anybody.

"Send me word what you think I should do, and ask Sir Walter, for you know well about these chances. Write back to me with Jenny. . . . And believe me, Dear Laidlaw, yours ever.

"JAMES HOGG."

When Hogg first went to live at Eltrive his aged father, as we have seen, found a home there under his son's roof. He was still living there at the time of the poet's marriage, but died not long afterwards.

Mr. and Mrs. Hogg, with their little son, the "wee Jamie" of the "Noctes," having removed to Mount Benger, the cottage at Eltrive was standing unoccupied, and the Shepherd at once put it at the disposal of Mr. Phillips, as a retreat for him and his aged wife in the time of their misfortune. To Eltrive they were accordingly brought, glad to get so quiet a home, and at the same time to be near their much loved and now only remaining daughter, Mrs. Hogg. We know that Hogg endeared himself to them by his many acts of kindness and consideration. Both the old people ended their days at the cottage, and were buried in Ettrick churchyard, side by side with the poet's ancestors. Mr. Phillips was the junior of his wife by a few years, but was the first to go to the everlasting rest. The following poem is supposed to express her feelings, when left alone after a married life of more than half a century :—

"AN AGED WIDOW'S LAMENT."

" Oh, is he gane, my good auld man ?
And am I left forlorn ?
And is that manly heart at rest,
The kindest e'er was born ?

" We've sojourn'd here, thro' hope and fear,
For fifty years and three,
And ne'er in all that happy time
Said he harsh word to me.

" And mony a braw and buirdly son,
And daughters in their prime,
His trembling hand laid in the grave,
Lang, lang afore the time.

" I dinna greet the day to see
That he to them has gane ;
But oh, it's fearful thus to be
Left in the world alane.

"Wi' a poor worn and broken heart,
Whose race of joy is run,
And scarce has e'en an opening left
For aught beneath the sun.

"My life nor death I winna crave,
Nor fret nor yet despond;
But a' my hope is in the grave
And the dear hame beyond."

CHAPTER IX.

1825—1831.

The years spent at Mount Benger—about seven in all—were years fraught with extreme anxiety and care. The Shepherd employed himself in incessant literary work. Either the public or the poet himself had become satiated with poetry; and he betook himself much to prose composition, producing many excellent tales and narratives. None of his prose writings is equal to the best of his poetical works; yet many of them are full of graphic pictures of rural life and supernatural visitations, which possess intense interest to many classes of readers. To this day the tales are read in remote districts, and if the age has gone past for believing the stories of ghosts and fairies, that is because romance has been driven out of people's lives, by the busy stir of business and the noisy din of railways and machinery. But the Ettrick Shepherd's Tales were not only popular, but were believed and relished as only stories which are believed can be. Perhaps it was better then than now. Is it not better to believe too much than too little?

Some of our readers may have seen a strange story of Hogg's which appeared in *Blackwood* long ago, entitled, "A Letter from South Africa," purporting to tell of a band of ourang outangs which carried off first a baby and then its mother. The lady and child these uncouth captors treated with the utmost kindness, and finally elected the former as their queen. A story this too strange for human credulity to believe, one would think! Nevertheless, the author received not one but several letters, asking if the events related had really occurred. Mrs. Hogg naturally asked him what answer he would return, and his reply was, "None at all—if there are people so silly as to believe it, let them do so." We do not think that he himself had any strong belief in ghosts, although without the supernatural element, how could his stories have been written, or, at all events, so written as to be read and believed? Nurtured as he had been, he could not help having faith to some extent in those creations "more than mortal," reported to frequent his native glens. Strange, indeed, it would have been, had James Hogg, the child of imagination, succeeded in entirely freeing his mind from the weird superstitions of his ancestors.

Sixty years ago serial publications were neither so common, nor may we say, so commonplace, as they have now become, but their place was supplied to some extent by the "Annuals." These volumes, as their designation implies, made their appearance once a year, and were prettily bound and daintily illustrated collections of prose and verse. They were welcomed by old and young, as a pleasant addition to the literature of the day. They rejoiced in the names of "Friendship's Offering," "The Souvenir," "The Forget-me-not," "The Anniversary." Each had, as editor, a lady or gentleman well known to literature; and as contributors, the first authors of the day. On all sides Hogg was appealed to for contributions to the "Annuals," and gladly complied, for the publishers paid well, and the work was not difficult. Other publications, not so light in their nature, were also clamorous for an article from the now famous Ettrick Shepherd, and accordingly we here give some extracts from letters written by "Editors," requesting his assistance, which are not without interest.

From Dr. Stoddart, Editor of *New Times.*

"4 Doctor's Commons,
"10 Feb. 1825.

"My Dear Sir,

"You will receive this day's *New Times* containing an article in the *Variorum* on your admirable poem, 'Queen Hynde.' It is calculated to call public attention strongly to her Majesty.

"But how shall I address you on your poor 'Ante Burghen'?

"I had reserved him for a *bonne bouche* on the meeting of parliament. So chary of him was I that I would not even read him to a friend. Dr. Maguire and two or three others supped with me last Saturday. We had some fine music, and to diversify the pleasures of the evening I read to them (several of them not having seen it before), your 'Left-handed Fiddler,' which was interrupted with constant bursts of laughter, but I refused to read the 'Ante Burghen,' not choosing to forestall the *Variorum.*

"On Monday afternoon I delivered the 'Ante

Burghen' with my own hands to the printer's devil, to carry to the printer, for insertion in Tuesday's *Variorum.* But a sad devil he was; for about half-past eleven at night, I was told to my extreme horror, that no 'Ante Burghen' was to be found! The little devil had dropped it on the street. I sallied out in the rain, poked in all the gutters, summoned all the watchmen, told them my doleful tale, and concluded by an appeal to the universal passion by offering them a guinea, which next morning I raised to two, as you will see by the enclosed handbill, which I send for your edification.

"Alas! I have not heard a syllable of the poor 'Ante Burghen.' It is a melancholy loss, and is aggravated by a thousand vexatious reflections—1st. Never having been played such a devil's trick before, I took no precautions against it now; 2nd. It was the first fruits of your kindness, and I cannot expect a repetition unless you abound still more than I can conceive in that estimable quality; 3rd. You say you have no other copy.

"But my good sir, suffer me to hope that ere long you will have a copy. Suffer me to hope that you will sit down and call to mind all that was contained in the first copy with perhaps a few additions—I will not say improvements. If you could recall the 'converse sweet' of Gabriel and Sir John, the abstract but vehement and dispassionate love of the former for womankind, etc.

"If you *could* do all this and *would* send it once more to the *Variorum*, I promise you as I am a living man it should not be lost, for I would trust no devil . . . with so precious a deposit. But you will say, this is not a very modest request. I confess it, my dear sir; I throw myself then upon your mercy and am most truly,

"Your obliged obedt. servt.

"J. STODDART.

"Mr. Jas. Hogg."

The following from Allan Cunningham is on the same subject:—

"27 Lower Bellgrave Place, 13 Novr. 1829.

"My Dear Friend,

"When I placed three of your articles in H——'s hands and took his bill at two months in payment, I thought I had done a clever and a safe thing. He was, however, on the verge of bankruptcy, and became so in about three days before the bill was presented. . . . I have packed up all your articles and put them under cover, and only wait for your instructions regarding them.

"Thus perish the hopes of men. I expected to have established an Annual beneficial to myself, and not injurious to my friends; and from no one more than from yourself did I look for assistance. You acquitted yourself nobly, and I shall always consider your prose contribution to the "Anniversary" one of the finest of your works. Had the work continued, I would have had much pleasure in seeing you stand in the first rank of the contributors. But I built upon sand, and my edifice gave way. Wilson, Hogg, and Lockhart, among the Scotch, and Southey and Proctor, and Hemans and Loudon among the Southern, befriended me much, and I shall never forget their kindness.

"I have in some degree quitted the service of the muse, and betaken myself to biography. If you like what I have done, and are at all ambitious after distinction from my pen, you will oblige me by dying at your own convenience, committing by will your papers and memorandums to my care, and adding a request that your old comrade, Allan Cunningham, will dip his rustic pen in biographical ink for your sake. James, my beloved friend, think of this. . . . I beg, however, before you do anything rashly, that you will consult my excellent friend Mrs. Hogg, upon the propriety of this exit, and also take a look at the dear weans. Should you propose to defer it, I shall then take up another subject, even a poem, and try if I can come within a measured mile of the author of 'Kilmeny.' . . . .

"My wife joins me in love to the house of Hogg.

"Yours ever and ever,

"ALLAN CUNNINGHAM."

Cunningham seems also to have had his trials with publishers, as well as his friend Hogg. For either there had been a tide in the affairs of the trade, not taken at the full, or else Hogg had been more than usually unfortunate in his selection of publishers; true it is he was pursued by misfortune in this matter. No sooner had he, over and over again, put his work into a publisher's hands, than the publisher was declared to be either bankrupt or "shaky," and the entire career of the Ettrick Shepherd was darkened by these unlucky connections. One or two noble exceptions there were, but as a rule, what I have stated is a fact.

The annexed letter cannot fail to interest many readers, referring as it does to one who is now a distinguished Scotsman of whom we have all cause to be proud, Sir John Steele, the celebrated sculptor.

"Dundee, 27th January, 1829.

"My Dear Sir,

"I was in Edinburgh about a fortnight ago, and being Christmas time, I had some expectation of meeting you there, but was disappointed. I had good accounts of you, however, from our friends the professor (Wilson), and Mr. H. Bell. . . .

"I write you at present chiefly to request that you will vouchsafe a friendly countenance and perhaps interference, on behalf of a young artist in whose success I feel considerable interest, and whom I have already introduced to several literary people, all friends of your own, in Edinburgh. I allude to Mr. John Steel, who a few years ago commenced business as a sculptor. He has already executed several busts, particularly of Drs. Liston, Vandenhoffe, and Mr. Baird, which I along with many others consider very correct and meritorious likenesses. There are very few men in Scotland, it must be confessed, who are entitled to have their heads put in marble, or even in stucco, but I hope you wont take it amiss when I say that in my opinion the author of the 'Queen's Wake,' etc. etc., is one of the few; and in this opinion several friends to whom I have spoken on the subject most heartily concur. I suggested the thing to Mr. Steele, who at once expressed the greatest desire to be *allowed the privilege* of taking your bust, adding at the same time that he should strive to make it his masterpiece. I think, for my part, from what I have seen of Mr. Steel's handiwork, that he would make a cast worthy of the subject, the artist, and the art.

"Now, my dear sir, you must not be at all angry with me for using the freedom to make this suggestion to you. . . . .

"I remain with great regard, my dear sir,
"Yours very truly,
"ALEX. MILLAR."

We do not think that the wish expressed in the above letter was ever carried out. The only cast known to us is that taken by Fillans.

From W. Blackwood, Esq.

"Innerleithen,
"23 August, 1828.

"My Dear Sir,

"I got here yesterday to see Mrs. Blackwood and the children, who came out on Monday.

" . . . Whether or not I may go with the Brethren of the Braes, will depend upon circumstances ; but while here, Mrs. B. and I fully intend to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Hogg and you.

"I send you *Maga*, and you will see it is only a single No. I found after having a good deal printed that I was disappointed of some articles which would have been a good excuse for two numbers, and I was therefore obliged to content myself with one good one. This deranged me a great deal, and forced me to keep back several articles, yours among the rest, which were to have gone into the second No.

"I fully intend to have two numbers next month, and I hope you will do whatever you can to send me something very capital and first rate.

"Many thanks for the brace of fine birds. Mrs. Blackwood joins me in best compts. to you and Mrs. Hogg,—and I am, my dear sir,

"Yours very truly,
"W. Blackwood."

The next letter, addressed by Mr. Hogg to his wife, although without the year, is probably written about the same time as the foregoing.

"Mount Benger, Aug. 27th.

"My dear Margt.,

"I have not a word to send you since my last. We are all well, and the great party at the Lakes takes place to-morrow. Mr. and Mrs. Blackwood are likewise to be here, but whether of the party or not, they have not sent me notice.

"I am very glad that you have not as yet put my darling Harriet to any unnecessary pain or trouble, for my own opinion always was that there was very little the matter with her.

" . . . My great wish was to put my two dear girls on shipboard, and see how they were accommodated, and under what care; but now, harvest having come on, and not one of my summer bargains sold, it is out of my power to get to Liverpool, but perhaps it may yet be in my power to see them before leaving Scotland. I enclose Mary the few verses I promised her, and am sorry I have not had the opportunity of inserting them in her album. And to Janet I send an inscription to be bound up in a copy of the 'Queen's Wake,' for which I enclose an order on Mr. Blackwood. Would to God it had been in my power to bestow something more valuable, upon two that I love so truly, and with all my heart. But a simple memorial of my affection is all I have to bestow.

"I am still undecided upon venturing such a valuable stock of lambs, and the markets in such a state. . . . Kiss my dear bairns for me.

"Your affectionate

"JAMES HOGG."

The young ladies here alluded to were nieces of Mrs. Hogg. They had been residing at Mount Benger, and were now about to join their father, Mr. Gray, in India.

"Darling Harriet" was at that time the bard's youngest child. While only an infant, the discovery had been made that the child was lame. No cause for this misfortune was apparent, but, although put under surgeons and bandage-makers, she never altogether got the better of the ailment. Sir Walter Scott, who was himself lame from childhood, took a great interest in the little Harriet, and used to ask, either on meeting Mr. or Mrs. Hogg, "And how is the foot?" She had been named Harriet Sidney in memory of her father's kind friend the Duchess of Buccleuch. To her is addressed the following pretty poem:—

"A BARD'S ADDRESS TO HIS YOUNGEST DAUGHTER."

"Come to my arms, my dear wee pet,
My gleesome, gentle Harriet!
The sweetest babe art thou to me
That ever sat on parents' knee;
Thy every feature is so cheering,
And every motion so endearing.
Thou hast that eye was mine erewhile,
Thy mother's blythe and grateful smile,
And such a playful, merry mien,
That care flies off whene'er thou'rt seen.

"And if aright I read thy mind,
The child of nature thou'rt design'd;
For, even while yet upon the breast,
Thou mimick'st child, and bird, and beast;
Can'st cry like Maggy o'er her book,
And crow like cock, and caw like rook,

Boo like a bull, or blare like ram,
And bark like dog, and bleat like lamb,
And when afield in sunshine weather,
Thou minglest all these sounds together:
Then who can say, thou happy creature,
Thou'rt not the very child of nature!

"Child of my age and dearest love!
As precious gift from God above,
I take thy pure and gentle frame,
And tiny mind of mounting flame;
And hope that through life's chequer'd glade—
That weary path that all must tread—
Some credit from thy name will flow
To the old bard who loved thee so.
At least, thou shalt not want thy meed—
His blessing on thy beauteous head,
And prayers to him whose sacred breath
Lighten'd the shades of life and death—
Who said with sweet benignity,
'Let little children come to Me.'

"And now, sweet child, one boon I crave—
And pout not, for that boon I'll have—
One kiss I ask for grandam's sake,
Who never saw thy tiny make;
And one for her who left us late,
Laid low, but not forgotten yet;
And thy sweet mother, too, the nearest
To thee and me, the kindest, dearest—
Thou sacred, blest memorial,
When I kiss thee, I kiss them all!

"'Tis very strange, my little dove!
That all I ever loved, or love,
In wondrous visions still I trace
While gazing on thy wondrous face:
Thy very name brings to my mind
One, whose high birth and soul refined,

Withheld her not from naming me,
Even in life's last extremity.
Sweet babe! thou art memorial dear
Of all I honour and revere?

"Come, look not sad: though sorrow now
Broods on thy father's thoughtful brow,
And on the reverie he would dwell—
Thy prattle soon will that expel.
How darest thou frown, thou freakish fay—
And turn thy chubby face away,
And pout as if thou took'st amiss
Thy partial parent's offered kiss?
Full well I know thy deep design;
'Tis to turn back thy face to mine,
With triple burst of joyous glee,
And fifty strains at mimicry!

"Crow on, sweet child! thy wild delight
Is moved by visions heavenly bright;
What wealth from nature may'st thou gain,
With promptings high to heart and brain!
But hope to all—though yet improved,
Thou art a shepherd's best beloved:
And now above thy brow so fair,
And flowing films of flaxen hair,
I lay my hand once more, and frame
A blessing, in the holy name
Of that supreme divinity,
Who breathed a living soul in thee."

We subjoin part of a letter from Mr. Thomas Pringle, who had been associated with Hogg in the early days of *Blackwood's Magazine*:—

"London, Dec. 11, 1827.

"Dear Hogg,

"Though you have not replied to either of the two letters I have written to you since my return from the Cape, I flatter myself your silence is not owing to any decay of old kindness, and that you will do me a service (as you may do just now), as cordially as ever, when I ask you and on my own behalf.

"I have just undertaken the editorship of the *Friendship's Offering*, one of the elegant annuals that have lately become so popular, and I must depend for success in obtaining able contributions very much on the exertions of my dear friends on my behalf. . . .

"I have just written to Sir Walter, Wilson, and one or two others. Wilson, I flatter myself, notwithstanding some coolness which took place after the explosion of the Chaldee Manuscript (of which it seems your wicked pen was the real contriver after all) has never felt any real unkindness towards me, as assuredly I never did towards him, and I think he will on the present occasion frankly lend me his assistance. . . . It is rumoured that Campbell and Moore are also to edit annuals this incoming season, and I believe the report, as far as regards Campbell, is correct. So that unless I am supported by you and Scott and other men of might and main, I shall make but a poor figure in the field, with such admitted knights to tilt with. . . . Do write on receipt, and assure me of your cordial support.

"Believe me always, dear Hogg,
"Yours very faithfully,
"THOS. PRINGLE."

We shall here give a letter from Mr. John Galt, on behalf of the editor of *Fraser's Magazine*, begging something from the Shepherd either in prose or verse.

"23 Downing Street, 6th February, 1830.

"My Dear Damon, or Patie or Roger,

"Or by whatever name thou answerest, as at this season you have nothing to do but to blow your nails like Shakespear's 'Dick the shepherd,' I am commissioned by the editor of Fraser's new *Town and County Magazine* to beg something in verse or prose, and to express a wish that you would become a contributor. Their intentions are to do the handsome thing by their contributors, and anything pretty and pathetical will be duly appreciated. I have promised an occasional article, and others of Ebony's friends have done the same. Do write me 'and that early' anent this.

"I have come forth lately with another Scottish brat. I wish I could have sent you a copy. On this occasion my publishers are Colburn and Co., whom not knowing very intimately, I do not like to trouble much for copies. 'Tis a terrible pity that you have never seen a Canadian forest. I foregathered with some of your kith and kin in Canada—decent folk. One remarkable thing in the American woods is their entire freedom from fairies and all sorts of hobgoblins. If you could create yourself, by your wonted necromancy, into a settler in the backwoods, and do Theocritus for the new magazine, you might add a few millions of years to your fame. To be sure, there is some difficulty in the inhabitant of a treeless forest conceiving a forest of trees, but you can make woods as well as my friend Martin makes mountains.—When he has occasion to delineate such a thing as a world scattered to pieces by a deluge, he takes a 'bakey' full of coals, as many lumps as possible, and with a little fancy, magnifies them into fragments of the great globe itself. I would therefore advise you to collect all the mops, besoms, brushes, and kirn staffs, and stick them in your midden, in an inverted position, and then sit down and draw from the models, supplying from your poetical lumber-room bark branches and leaves, taking care not to show on the trunks anything like a twig, till you have made them each and all severally as high as the Melville monument. The aggregates and colour of the midden will suggest cradle heaps, *alias* the graves of ancient trees, and the weathered leaves which cover them. Then think of a man with an axe on his shoulder, followed by as many children as Jacob, and a wife with a bundle on her back entering the leafy caverns; then make all manner of afflictions befall them,—this you will, I am persuaded, do as truly as if your experiences had been as manifold as mine. I saw Lockhart the other day. . . . He is very well and in good spirits, but Mrs. Lockhart is, I am sorry to say, still a great invalid, but she bears the afflictions with great equanimity. My family are still in Canada, but I expect them in the course of the summer. Can't you put your foot on the 'James Watt,' and make your *debut* in London while I am a bachelor? If you do, we shall get up a public dinner for you; think of that! and give my compliments to Mrs. Hogg, and say that ladies are not admitted on such occasions.

"Yours truly,
"JOHN GALT."

The Ettrick Shepherd's great ambition seems to have been to become a farmer. Having been accustomed during his youth to look upon the large stock farmers as people of importance and good social standing, it is not unnatural that he should have thought it would be a good thing if he too should become one of them. That it was a mistaken ambition there can be no doubt, and, of all the misfortunes which befel him, the becoming tenant of Mount Benger was the worst, and the most lasting in its effects. Better, far better had it been for him had he contented himself with Eltrive as a home, and only literature as a profession. Mrs. Hogg used frequently to say in after years, that, had it not been for Mount Benger, Mr. Hogg might have lived and died in good circumstances. At this date it is not worth while to enter into the causes of the failure of the poet's farming speculations. Many of these causes would be unintelligible to most readers, and would possess no interest to any, except it may be to a few stock-farmers.

The Shepherd was working hard all the time, conjuring things new and old from the "dictionary of his brain." He was making money in this way, but it was all of no avail. Mount Benger, with its high rent and its bad seasons, was a gulf which swallowed up all his earnings, and still like the daughter of the horse leech was crying "Give, give."

Then the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Hogg was of the most liberal and most genial kind. And it being known that the regime at Mount Benger was according to the old Irish rhyme, "Hospitality, no formality, all reality," there was no lack of visitors to take advantage of it. As everybody was made welcome, whatever his errand or degree, we can well believe there were some who went merely to gratify curiosity. There were very many, however, of a different type. Good kind friends and literary acquaintances, not a few gathered around the shepherd's hospitable table. "In illustration of this we may state," says the Rev. Henry Scott Riddell, "that on a day when a certain individual came to dine with the Shepherd and his family only, as they themselves expected, fourteen additional persons, before the day was done, dined in the house." The same author says a little further on:—"The day of the fourteen diners might be an extra chance day, but every morning noon and night, especially throughout the summer and autumn months, brought more or fewer to his house whom he loved to see. Those who came in carriages or on horseback, to call, or by appointment, were less difficult to deal with; because they came at regular hours; they had their refreshment and it was over; but those who haunted the hills and holms of Yarrow for their scenery, or its lakes and streams for their trout, came almost at all hours. Many, as well as the writer of this, have marvelled how Mrs. Hogg's patience became not oftentimes utterly exhausted; but if the lord of the little *bein* ha' was a poet whom nature, of her own free will, made generous, the lady was no less a philosopher versant in all the inexhaustible friendliness which supplies dry raiment to the wet, and food and rest to the weary, and the smile of welcome departed not from her countenance, nor the law of kindness from her tongue.

To a friend, the Shepherd once said, 'My bit hoose,' looking back at it, 'is e'now just like a bee-skep, fu' o' happy living creatures, an nae doubt, like a bee-skep, it will have to cast some day when it can haud its inhabitants nae langer.'"*

In the absence of his gentle and hospitable partner, it seems that on occasions Hogg's patience gave way, for he wrote to Mrs. Hogg, when in Edinburgh on a visit:—

"Dearest Margaret,

"We are all quite well. Harper and George are here, and on the same night came other four gentlemen, with two gigs, two horses, and six dogs, at eleven o'clock at night. I turned them all away and would not suffer them to come within the door. C. S. was one of them. I was in extremely bad humour, and did not try to conceal it.

I go to Yair to-morrow, and, of course, in my green coat. I have the bag about my shoulders, and the horses are at the door. We have had no sport. We have begun shearing to-day, and have had one deluge of rain since you left.

Kiss Maggy and Harriet for their dear papa. I wakened this morning saying, "dear, dear, sweet Harriet." I had been dreaming that she had a fever, etc., etc.

JAMES HOGG."

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* Memoir by Rev. H. S. Riddell.

The poet was, as the reader will perceive, a fond father, and was much loved by his children. He made a point of speaking to them as to intelligent beings, and not in the trifling style adopted by many loving parents, such as that depicted by Dickens in "The Chimes." Little Dot's addresses to the carrier's baby are exquisite, but the Poet of Ettrick spoke ever lovingly, but rationally, to his little ones.

He was always very fond of dogs, and valued their affection in return. "I carena muckle for folk that bairns and dogs dinna like," was a favourite maxim of his.

Hogg was a keen sportsman, both with the rod and the gun. The 12th of August was ever a memorable day at Mount Benger, and in later years at Eltrive. Mrs. Hogg, no doubt, was glad of the help which her husband's gun afforded to the larder. There were few visitors to whom a moor-fowl from the hills, or a caller trout from the Yarrow, was not a welcome and sufficient repast. Lady Scott, in her pretty broken English, used to say that Abbotsford was just "de Hotel *widout* de pay," and something of the same kind might have been affirmed of the less pretentious home at Mount Benger. Fifty years ago, there was no baker's cart, nor butcher's van, coming once or twice a week from Selkirk or Peebles, as probably there is now. The nearest market-town was fourteen miles off. The carrier passed, or came along the road once a week, bringing such stores as had been ordered beforehand, but, for the rest, the only resources were at home. The stock of loaf-bread must frequently have been exhausted, but there was plenty of oat-cakes and flour scones to be had, baked by willing hands. Fresh milk, new laid eggs, trout from the Yarrow or Saint Mary's Loch, a grouse from the moors or a chicken from Mrs. Hogg's poultry-yard, constituted a feast which might have satisfied even the epicures of Ambrose's parlour, not to speak of that feast of reason which is supposed in such cases to have accompanied the less noble part of the meal.

CHAPTER X.

1821—1831.

"LONE St. Mary's silver lake," mentioned by Sir Walter Scott in the introduction to the second canto of "Marmion," and made familiar by Wordsworth's sweet lines,

> "The swan on still St. Mary's lake
> Floats double, swan and shadow"—

is associated with many scenes in the poet's life. Not less, however, will St. Mary's Loch long continue to be associated with the name of Tibbie Shiel, a name which has become almost as classical as that of the loch itself. We cannot resist giving the reader a short history of this remarkable old lady. Many there are, who, born after the Ettrick Shepherd had bid farewell for ever to his loved St. Mary's, became well acquainted with Tibbie Shiel and her picturesque house of entertainment, and who will remember for long the cosy comforts provided by the genial landlady of St. Mary's cottage. She died only in 1878, at the great age of ninety-six, having been a widow for upwards of half a century.

"Tibby Shiel was a native of Ettrick. Not long ago we were in that district, and about a mile 'up the water' above Ettrick Church came upon what seemed to be the remains of a cottage garden. Confused quantities of old-fashioned roses and other flowers were still flourishing, but no remains of a house were to be seen. Here stood the cot where Tibbie Shiel was born, little over a mile from Ettrick Hall, the birthplace of James Hogg. Like other country maidens, her life as a girl was uneventful, and she passed many years in domestic service. Humble enough that service had been, as for several years she served in the family of Hogg's father, but in due time Tibbie, like her master's son, was destined to become quite a notable person. She married, and became Mrs. Richardson, but retained, as is customary in the locality, her maiden name.

"She was early left a widow with six children, and it was then that she entered on the course of life which was to make her famous. Her husband, a Westmoreland man, had occupied the humble position of mole-catcher to Colonel Napier, and it was largely owing to the kindness of that estimable gentleman, that with the fruits of former industry and thrift, she was enabled to become tenant of the humble dwelling which has become a landmark in the classic district of St. Mary's. The widow had not been long established in her new home, when the place began to acquire an enviable reputation with the numerous visitors whom love of sport, or the charm of poetic associations, attracted to the district. A tidy housewife, Tibbie knew how to dispense that homely yet substantial hospitality which is specially grateful after a day among the hills with rod or gun; and among those to whom she thus ministered, there were not wanting men both able and willing to make the humble hostelry known to fame. An early frequenter of the cottage was the late Robert Chambers. . . . But it was chiefly through Hogg and his associates of the 'Blackwood' coterie that Tibbie became in a manner connected with the literary history of the day. The presence of the genial Shepherd must have enhanced the attractions of sport for Wilson, Aytoun, and the rest of that brilliant circle, and rendered more frequent their visits to the romantic braes of Yarrow; and many doubtless were the nights and suppers of the gods, enlivened with wit and song, and breaking out, ever and anon, into boisterous fun and frolic, which these and other kindred spirits enjoyed in that humble cottage by the Loch. Finding, as such jovial souls are ever apt to do, "their warmest welcome in an inn," many of them would probably have been inclined to aver that of all terrestrial inns, there was none, on the whole, to be preferred to Tibbie's.

"Of the feast of reason and flow of soul of which in these old days the cottage was the frequent scene, few, alas, survive to tell. Habitués of the place have been heard to regret that no record was kept of the remarkable gatherings which took place from time to time under that humble roof-tree; but in the nature of the case this was not to be expected. . . . The veteran anglers can recall how Hogg would electrify the company with picturesque descriptions of fishing adventures, winding up, it might be, with the triumphant production of a large bull trout whose obsequies would thereafter be celebrated in a protracted 'gaudeamus.' Such it seems was the name applied by these jolly votaries of the rod to the symposia with which their days of exhilarating sport were usually wound up. It is not to be supposed, however, that under Tibbie's roof such meetings ever degenerated into scenes of mere dissipation.

"Although whisky-toddy was indulged in, as the beverage best suited to the mountain air, moderation and propriety were steadily insisted on. The occasional presence of the Shepherd tended to keep down rather than encourage any bacchanalian tendency; and if some of the guests, in spite of the worthy landlady's remonstrances, persisted in sitting late, this was rather to enjoy an extra glass for the sake of a lilt from the bard of 'Kilmeny.' The favourite songs of Hogg, which he invariably sung with a heartiness of expression that counterbalanced any deficiency in musical taste, were the spirited 'Cam' ye by Athol,' and the simple love-lay 'When the kye comes hame.'

"Tibbie's early connection with Hogg's family has been already referred to. It was also her lot to attend the Shepherd in his last illness. A genuine friendship seems to have existed between the strangely assorted pair, though the worthy landlady, plodding and practical in all her ways, had her own opinion of what others most admired in the eccentric son of genius—an opinion which, years after the Shepherd had been laid to rest in his much loved Ettrick, she thus expressed to a friend—'Aye, Hogg was a gey sensible man, for a' the nonsense he wrat'!

"*Apropos* of those reminiscences of the border poet, one of the few relics preserved at the cottage is a plaster cast from his features, taken after death. This is naturally looked on as a valuable possession, and we understand that an eminent sculptor has made overtures for the use of it, with the view of executing a bust of the famous Shepherd."*

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* Extracted from the *Scotsman* newspaper.

On the 25th June, 1825, Mr. Gray, Hogg's brother-in-law, at that time resident in Belfast, writes from thence, speaking of some members of society in that Irish city—"They are much better acquainted with the knaves of clubs and diamonds than either 'The Lady of the Lake' or 'The Queen's Wake'; yet most of them have heard of this last poem, and even know that its author is a strange, outlandish kind of fellow of the name of Hogg. Yet to reconcile you to these *soi-disant* Athenians, not two weeks ago I met a gentleman at a dinner party—a clergyman, who had not only seen 'The Queen's Wake,' but actually recited long passages from 'Mary Scott' and 'Kilmeny,' and they were greatly admired. This gentleman's opinion of this poem is so high that he has purchased two or three copies to make presents to his friends.

"That you may not think us altogether Goths, I may likewise add, that only the day before yesterday, at a public breakfast, I heard the 'Cameronian Hymn,' from 'The Brownie of Bodsbeck,' sung by a concert of sweet voices with a pathos that moistened more than Scottish eyes."

Even in the Green Isle, it seems, the name and poetry of the bard of Ettrick were not altogether unknown. We do not think that James Hogg ever met Moore, or his noble contemporary, Lord Byron. Some letters, however, passed between Hogg and Byron. These would have added much to the interest of this volume, but, alas, they are not now to be found. The Shepherd valued them greatly, and, deeming his visitors at Eltrive to be as honest as himself, was in the habit of exhibiting to many of his guests these, to him, peculiar treasures. One luckless day, it was discovered that Lord Byron's letters were gone—gone, we suppose, in the pocket of one of the visitors before whom Hogg had opened up his casket of treasures. It was an act of theft, and probably Hogg had his own suspicions as to the thief, but we never heard a name mentioned in connection with the base act. Mr. H. S. Riddell says of Hogg—"Nothing at any time hurt his feelings so much as to hear one man depreciate another, excepting, perhaps, his being informed that a countryman had been guilty of performing a naughty action." It was in harmony with this phase of his character that the pilferer of the letters from Lord Byron was not talked about.

Of his first meeting with Wordsworth, Hogg gives a graphic account in his Autobiography. The introduction took place at the house of Mrs. Wilson, the mother of Professor Wilson. It was a singular gratification to the Shepherd to meet the distinguished poet of the Lakes. Hogg says—"I listened to him that night as to a superior being, far exalted above the common walks of life. . . . We called on several noblemen and gentlemen in company; and all the time I was in Scotland I loved him better and better." The two poets, the one of nature, the other of the supernatural, afterwards made an excursion together to the Shepherd's own country. A better guide Wordsworth could not have had, as Hogg knew every nook and crannie, every glen and streamlet in Ettrick and Yarrow. He afterwards visited the author of the "Excursion" at Rydal Mount, and met him from time to time. Wordsworth, however, gave the bard of Ettrick offence on one occasion, which he seemed never to forget. It was only a passing remark made by Wordsworth, in which he repudiated the idea of Hogg being grouped with himself as one of the poets. The incident had best be told in Hogg's own words:—"This anecdote has been told and told again, but never truly; and was likewise brought forward in the 'Noctes Ambrosianæ' as a joke, but it was no joke; and the plain, simple truth of the matter was this:—It chanced one night when I was there (at Rydal Mount), that there was a resplendent arch across the zenith, from the one horizon to the other, of something like the aurora, but much brighter. It is a scene that is well remembered, for it struck the country with admiration, as such a phenomenon had never before been witnessed in such perfection; and as far as I could learn, it had been more brilliant over the mountains and pure waters of Westmorland than anywhere else. Well, when word came into the room of the splendid meteor, we all went out to view it; and on the beautiful platform at Mount Rydal, we were all walking in twos and threes, arm-in-arm, talking of the phenomenon and admiring it. Now, let it be remembered that Wordsworth, Professor Wilson, Lloyd, de Quincey, and myself, were present, besides several other literary gentlemen, whose names I am not certain that I remember aright. Miss Wordsworth's arm was in mine, and she was expressing some fears that the splendid stranger might prove ominous, when I, by ill luck, blundered out the following remark, thinking that I was saying a good thing—'Hoot, m'm, its neither mair nor less than just a triumphal arch, raised in honour of the meeting of the poets.' 'That's not amiss—eh! eh!—that's very good,' said the Professor, laughing. But Wordsworth, who had de Quincey's arm, gave a grunt, and turned on his heel, and leading the little opium chewer aside, he addressed him in these disdainful and venomous words—'Poets, poets! What does the fellow mean? Where are they?' Who could forgive this? for my part, I never can and never will." So says the offended poet, and yet we know that, being one of the most easily offended, he was also one of the most generous of men; and he would have forgiven the offensive words had Wordsworth ever sought a reconciliation.

In speaking of this oft told story, Mr. William Howitt says:—"Whether Wordsworth did utter these words, or de Quincey only quizzed Hogg with them, it is a great pity that poor Hogg's mind was suffered in the least to retain the rankling supposition of it. The anecdote appeared in the 'Noctes'; it was made the subject of much joke and remark, and must have reached Wordsworth's ears. What a thousand pities, then, that by a single line to Hogg, or in public, he did not take the sting out of it. Nobody was so soon propitiated as Hogg. To have been acknowledged as a brother poet by Wordsworth would have filled his heart with much happiness. Immediately after his death, Wordsworth hastened to make such a recognition; but of how little value is posthumous praise! Hogg died on the 21st of November, and on the 30th Wordsworth sent a poem to the "Athenæum."

This poem is well known, and familiar to all admirers of Wordsworth and of the Ettrick Shepherd:

> “When first descending from the moorland
> I saw the stream of Yarrow glide
> Along a bare and open valley,
> The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.
>
> . . . .
>
> “The mighty minstrel breathes no longer,
> ’Mid mouldering ruins low he lies ;
> And death upon the braes of Yarrow
> Has closed the Shepherd-poet’s eyes.”

Thus in death, if not in life, the Shepherd-poet had the meed of praise he had longed for. And yet what did it matter? It is not the being called a poet, which makes the poet. And certainly Hogg was no less a true son of poesy, because the Laureate turned on his heel and said, “Poets! where are they.” “The rose,” we know, “by any other name will smell as sweet.”

With Southey the Shepherd was likewise well acquainted. They met for the first time in Keswick, when Hogg was on his way to Westmoreland. Although amazed and somewhat chagrined that the English poet was a water-drinker—a qualification scarcely known in those days, and by no means recognised as a virtue—

the Shepherd says—"Before we had been ten minutes together my heart was knit to Southey, and every hour thereafter my esteem for him increased. . . . The whole of Southey's conversation and economy left an impression of veneration on my mind which no future contingency shall either extinguish or injure. . . We have only exchanged a few casual letters since that period, and I have never seen this great and good man again." There seems to have arisen a mutual liking between these two poets, so dissimilar in character, in education, and in social standing. For this meeting must have taken place at an early period of the Ettrick Shepherd's career—probably in 1811—at all events before the publication of the "Queen's Wake," when first the Shepherd found himself really inspired.

We have already inserted one letter from Southey. Here is another written at a later date.

"Dear Shepherd,

"Feldberg tells me he shall see you in Edinburgh. I take the opportunity, which this offers, to tell you that I am glad you are married, glad to hear you have a child, and that I heartily wish you long life and continued happiness.

A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* says the Lake poets swear at everybody. He lies. I swear at no one—except Mr. Jeffrey. What I say of any man I would just as readily say *to* him. And what I say of the Ettrick Shepherd, ever since I have known him and his writings, is, that I admire and esteem and like him.

If I ever come to your lake, or you to mine, or wherever else we may meet (as I hope we shall do) it will give me great pleasure to shake you by the hand.

"God bless you and yours,

"ROBERT SOUTHEY.

"Keswick, 19th Oct., 1821."

The letter which follows is from Mr. Blackwood, and bears reference to the epic poem, "Queen Hynde." It was published in 1824, and although the author and the publisher thought very highly of it, the public was of another opinion, and "Queen Hynde" never became popular.

"Edin., 4th Dec., 1824.

"My Dear Sir,

"I have read the whole of 'Queen Hynde,' and I am quite sure it will make a sensation. There are as fine things in it as you have ever written, and there are as green ones that will be good food for the critics.

"You will laugh very heartily at your account of your interview with Byron at the Lakes, which you will find in the 'Noctes.' I anxiously hope you are preparing the correspondence. You should give the letters as near as you can possibly recollect them. It will be all the better fun for you to state plainly the blunder Medwin has made in saying that you and Byron had met, and that when you were giving Medwin an account of the interview, North and you were only cramming him, etc.

"Let me hear from you very soon. 'Queen Hynde' was shipped for London yesterday, and I will publish here on Tuesday.

"W. Blackwood."

In the nineteenth number of the "Noctes" the following regarding the unfortunate "Queen Hynde" occurs :—

"North. Have you been writing any more poetry lately, James? The unparalleled success of 'Queen Hynde' must have inspirited and inspired my dear Shepherd.

"Shepherd. Success! She's no had muckle o' that, man. She an' Wordsworth are abune the age we live in—it's no worthy of us; but wait a *why-*

lock—wait only for a thousand years or thereabouts, Mr. North, and you'll see who will have speeled to the tap o' the tree."

Although Hogg never met with Lord Byron, and never had an interview with him except in the pages of the "Noctes Ambrosianæ," the correspondence referred to in the letter of Mr. Blackwood was genuine. Lord Byron's letters, however, were unfortunately lost, as we mentioned in a former chapter.

With Coleridge and the rest of the Lake poets Hogg no doubt frequently met, although he has left no record of the circumstance. We know how he loved Christopher North, and, of course, he was familiar with de Quincey and the other *propriæ personæ* of the "Noctes Ambrosianæ." With John Galt, author of "The Ayrshire Legatees," a book admirable for its sly and quaint delineations of Scottish character, but now little known, an early intimacy was formed which lasted through many years. With both Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, Hogg maintained at intervals a correspondence, mostly on literary subjects.

Here is a letter from Mrs. S. C. Hall, dated April the 2nd, 1830.

"Dear Sir,

"As you did not in the parcel you so kindly sent acknowledge the receipt of a letter which I did myself the pleasure to write you some time ago, I take for granted that you did not receive it. In it I thanked you with sincerity and gratitude for the fine feelings you expressed towards me to our friend Allan Cunningham. To *receive*, to *deserve*, your approbation, is peculiarly gratifying to me; as living as I do, to attempt the delineation of natural character, I am anxious to merit the applause of those who *understand* the subject—as you so perfectly do. I have been too much behind the scenes to care much for newspaper praise. Although it increases one's reputation, it does not produce any heartfelt pleasure—at least to me. "The Prayer" for my "Juvenile" is all that I can wish, and the tale you intended for me also, is interesting and powerfully written—but surely, my dear sir, you would not wish my young readers to credit supernatural appearances? I could not take it upon my conscience to send the little darlings tremblingly to bed after perusing the very perfection of ghost stories from your pen. I find it singularly perplexing that the first tale you send me was one of seduction, your second (a thing by the way of extraordinary spirit and beauty) was a wanderer from fairy land. Now when all the sparkling, glittering, airy beings are buried under their own green moss and blue hare-bells—it would be downright sacrilege to fill the heads of our nurslings with their by-gone exploits. Your last is a ghost story! which kept even me awake half the night. It is a downright destruction of peace for you to write them so well. Pray, pray write me a simple tale, telling about your own pure and immortal Scottish children—without love—or ghosts—or fairies.

". . . . My dear sir, you must not be angry at my frankness. Indeed, Allan Cunningham told me to deal cordially, and tell my opinion honestly to you. I have done so, and feel that although you may censure my judgment, you will praise my sincerity. I should indeed be sorry if plain speaking lost me what I am so anxious to retain—your good opinion. . . . .

"Mr. Hall assures you of his esteem, and I am, dear sir, with much respect,

"Your very obliged,

"ANNA MARIA HALL."

On the 20th of September, 1874, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall celebrated their golden wedding, in memory of which interesting event an ornamental card containing the joint photograph of the attached couple, was issued and sent to their many friends. One of these, a token much valued by the recipient, was sent to the daughter of the Ettrick Shepherd, bearing the following autograph inscription :—

"Mr. and Mrs.——
from old friends of Mrs.——'s admirable father, by whom he was esteemed and valued very highly.
"Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall."

Letter from Mr. S. C. Hall.

"2 East Place, Lambeth,
"April 8th.

"My Dear Sir,

"I have felt more gratified than I can tell you, at the contents of your letter—it is, however, just the kind, frank, and generous communication that I was led to expect, from the account I had received of you by those who have known you long, and appreciate you highly.

"I enclose my friend Allan Cunningham's letter, and am quite sure that Pringle would have written me one to the same effect. Indeed, both those gentlemen are to write for 'The Amulet,' and I need not say that I do, and will do, all in my power to promote their views. I shall hope, then, dear sir, to receive a prose note and a poem from you at your earliest convenience. . . . . I of course sent you the magazine that you might perceive its character, and, as I hope, write for it. I said, I believe I could only offer you eight guineas a sheet—the present maximum—but in a short time I have every reason to believe I shall be able to offer you better terms. The magazine * had a circulation of 3000 a year and half ago—but fell down to 1500 in a few months, in consequence of the sad manner in which it was conducted. It is however now increasing, and I trust I shall be enabled to get it up. It is an organ of some influence among religious literary readers, and the only one they possess of a higher grade than the Evangelical or Methodist magazines, and I assure you religious readers are now-a-days the great buyers of books.

"Very faithfully yours,
"S. C. Hall."

Half a century has elapsed since these letters came from the hands of Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall. The latter has passed away, but in the interesting

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* Name not known.—Ed.

volumes published in 1883 by the survivor, he makes the following allusion to his intercourse with the Shepherd:—"Among the few of many Scottish worthies of whom I give memories in these pages, surely I must not omit 'the Ettrick Shepherd.' How I should have enjoyed a day with him on the Braes of Yarrow. Even now, across all the years that have passed, I can hear his hearty voice and his jovial laugh, and see his sunburnt face not yet paled by a month of 'merrie companie' in London. 'I like to talk about myself,' so begins his autobiography. No doubt he was an egotist, but so is every shepherd when he talks of sheep; so is the mariner when he speaks of perils in sailing a ship; so are all men who dwell on matters which constitute their 'personality,' and which they understand better than others do. In short, so are all teachers. The accusation of egotism, and also that of plagiarism, are easily made, but are not so easy of proof. Few men have so thoroughly triumphed over difficulties; none came more triumphantly out of them. James Hogg was a more marvellous man than Robert Burns; far less great as a poet, certainly;

but marvellous in the dauntless energy with which he struggled against circumstances, yet more adverse than those of Burns, and reached—not an untimely grave, but a secure position in the world of letters. Hogg was as much as Southey 'a man of letters by profession'; and surely one of the most remarkable men of the century passed away when

'Ettrick mourned her shepherd dead.'

"A wrestle with fortune, indeed, was his! chequered yet successful, and marked during the whole of his fairly long life by good spirits, that were partly the result of a good constitution, and greatly, perhaps, derived from his sanguine self-esteem.

"I remember one of the evenings he passed with us; he had dined with Sir George Warrender, whom some wag suggested must have been Sir George *Provender* to Hogg, for the Shepherd had evidently enjoyed the good fare provided for him before he came to us. He sang some of his own Jacobite songs with great gusto; and as many then present saw him for the first and last time, they did not quickly forget him of whom they had heard and read so much.

"The visit of the Ettrick Shepherd to London took place in 1832. It is scarcely too much to say that the sensation he produced in literary circles may be likened to that which might have been created by the temporary presence of Ben Nevis on Blackheath. A striking sight it was to see the Shepherd fêted in aristocratic *salons*, mingling with the learned and polite of all grades—clumsily, but not rudely. He was rustic without being coarse; not attempting to ape the refinement to which he was unused; but seemed perfectly aware that all eyes were upon him, and accepting admiration as a right.

"He was my guest several times during that visit; and at my house he met many of his literary contemporaries, whom he might not otherwise have known. Among them was Miss Landon, then in the zenith of her fame. When the one poet was presented to the other, the tall Shepherd looked earnestly down for perhaps half a minute at the *petite* L. E. L. 'Eh!' he exclaimed, in a rich manly Scottish

voice, 'I didna think ye'd been sae bonnie! I've said many hard things aboot ye. I'll do sae nae mair. I didna think ye'd been sae bonnie!'

"At the dinner at the Freemasons' Tavern, on January 25th, 1832, given nominally to commemorate the birth-day of Robert Burns, but really to receive the Shepherd, many men of note were present; the Scottish element naturally predominating. When the usual toasts had been given, the toast of the evening was announced, or rather should have been. But the toast-master had no idea that the guest thus honoured was originally a simple Shepherd; and consequently conceived that he was satisfactorily fulfilling his duty when he called on the assembled company for 'A bumper toast to the health of *Mister Shepherd.*' A roar of laughter throughout the hall was the result, and the hero of the evening joined in it as heartily as the rest."

To the writer of this, the name of R. P. Gillies is fraught with recollections the most weird and horrible. He was the author or translator, I know not which, of "German Stories," the perusal of which used to make my flesh creep and my hair stand on end. They had, notwithstanding, a peculiar sort of attraction, and I read them over and over again, even although going to bed in the dark after doing so was simply impossible. "Robert Peirce Gillies was a member of the Scottish bar," partly an invalid, "but versatile in literature, full of literary gossip, and noted in those days for 'the all but princely' style of his hospitalities." Here is a letter from him to Hogg, which well bears out the picture given * of him above by Professor Masson.

"Blackwood's. Tuesday.

"Dear Hogg,

"Thrice if not four times already have you been in Edinburgh without looking near us. I hope you will not leave town *this time* without favouring us with a visit. We are all well at present, and will be happy if you will dine with us any day. Ever yours,

"R. P. Gillies."

"I wrote a very long letter, but never put it in, in praise of your third vol. of the 'Perils,' which I read at Hollycot. Blackwood will say to you how much I spoke of it to him, so that he was unable to deny that all that I alleged was absolutely true, without a word of exaggeration. It is preeminently vivid in its characters and descriptions—but after a long walk from Leith, shall not attempt to set down a critique just now. Only I was more delighted with it than anything I had seen for a long time. I gave Blackwood tother day an unreadable tale, which I think you would make a good one."

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* Life of de Quincey.

These letters from contemporaries of the Ettrick Shepherd, which we have selected from among many still in existence, have a certain interest, which doubtless would have been greatly enhanced had the replies they had called forth been also extant. But none are to be found. Hogg did not, we know, write many letters, scarcely any of mere friendship. After his marriage, when he and his wife were absent one from the other, frequent letters passed between them. Many of these are too private to be given to the world, but as exemplifying how kind and considerate he was in his domestic relations, we are induced to quote extracts from Hogg's letters to his wife more fully than we have yet done in the foregoing pages.

"Mount Benger, Aug. 20th, 1828.

"Dearest Margt.,

"Why have you not sent me a line by post or otherwise, knowing how much my heart is with you and those in your care. How is my poor Harriet, and what are they doing with her? I can hardly think of my darling being put into steel boots, like the ancient Covenanters. That night after you left me I never closed an eye, but the fatigues of the moors have fairly overcome that disposition. . . . .

"I told you I went to Yair, in my Border uniform, and was glad I did so, for everybody who had an uniform of any kind had it on, and there were three club* coats there besides mine. The Duke of Buccleuch and young 'Harden,' M.P., his friend, were both in splendid uniforms of some sort, though quite different. When the Duke came up to me in the drawing-room and addressed me, which he did—I did not know him!!! No. I could not conceive, in the least, who the gentleman was who addressed me. He was literally covered with gold over the whole body, with epaulettes and stars, and I am sure, for the space of one or two minutes, I looked very like a sheep.

. . . . . .

"The lamb market is gone so completely to wreck, that I do not think I shall dare to venture in next week, but we'll see about it.

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* Forest Club.

"JAMES HOGG."

"Eltrive Lake, Friday, 13.

"Dearest Margaret,

"As Mr. S. purposes coming to town to-morrow forenoon, and leaves at four, I send you a few lines to tell you that we are all in our ordinary. James has been bad with toothache and sore throat, but is mostly better this morning. The caravan is finished and looks well. Bring some green baizes for the hangings. I am to be at Innerleithen on Monday, at a curling match, but I shall not bring the cart unless sure of meeting you there. I shall wait on you till Friday's coach arrives. . . . We shall have the fatted calf killed for you, as the absent prodigal.

How thrifty M——— is! She would make things go twice as far as some sweet body that I ken o' . . . Little Mary* has just come in, and says you must bring her some sweet biscuits, as she cannot come to meet you with her sore leg. Mr. Marshall has no class, and we are all alike idle . . . .

"Your ever affte.,

"JAMES HOGG."

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* The baby.

The caravan alluded to in the foregoing letter deserves some notice. When first the poet and his wife began their married life, we have seen that it was on horseback they performed their local journeys. After that a gig had been started, as being more convenient for a matron. But in 1832 the family at Eltrive had increased to five children. Mr. and Mrs. Hogg regularly attended the parish church at Yarrow, five miles distant, with as many of the bairns as were of fit age. The gig was no longer sufficient to convey Mrs. Hogg and the children to Yarrow Kirk. In order to obviate all difficulties, the caravan was contrived. A peculiar sort of conveyance it was too, but serving the purpose admirably for which it was intended. It was, in truth, only a sort of light cart, over which was erected a movable tin dome, painted green, and with green baize curtains at either end. If not elegant, it was useful, and for the few remaining years to be passed at Eltrive was the "family coach." It was well known in the parish, and every Sunday might be seen wending its way past Yarrow

Feus, to the parish kirk, where good Dr. Russell ministered.

To Mrs. Hogg.

"Edinr., January 1st, 1831.

"My dearest Margt.,

"A good new year to you and our dear bairns and Mr. Brooks, and many happy returns of the season to you all. Kiss all the children for me, and remember me to them.

"Your affectionate,
"J. H."

CHAPTER XI.

1821—1831.

During the years spent by the poet and his wife at Eltrive Lake as well as at Mount Benger, he was in correspondence, as we have seen, with many of the literary men of the day.

Certain of the letters which this correspondence called forth we shall now give to the reader; many have been destroyed, others have been already printed in the foregoing pages.

Henry Glassford Bell was for many years the successful editor of the *Literary Journal*, and was during all his life a man of letters. He was perhaps best known by his poem on the unfortunate but lovely Mary, Queen of Scots, and from his having been for many years one of the Sheriffs in Glasgow. He died as Sheriff of Lanarkshire within the last ten years.

"York House, Hampstead, London,
May 25th, 1821.

"My Dear Shepherd,

"Much blame do I take to myself for not having written to you, in the first place to tell you that I was going to be married, and in the second to tell you that I was married. I assure you I have vowed almost every day since that incident took place to unburden my matrimonial soul to you, but somehow or other like your own Paddy O'Rafferty, I have scarcely ever been able to take pen in hand since.

'The glens and the woods with his strains never rung again,
Frae that day to this Paddy never has sung again.'

But now that we have come out to live at this beautiful village of Hampstead, about three miles from London, where Joanna Baillie and Matthews and Coleridge live also, a something of the feelings of younger days, when I was a careless bachelor, has come back upon me; and my conscience will not let me rest until I inform you of my continued existence and unchanged regard. I suppose you would be surprised when you heard that my connection with the journal was to cease. As you, no doubt, by this time, know Mr. Weir purchased the entire copyright, and proprietorship of it, and is now conducting it with good ability; and I hope with good success. I am well satisfied with the stability which the journal acquired under my management. It afforded a respectable return from the very first, and was a property of some value when I parted with it. But there is none of my contributors to whom I look back with greater pleasure, than to you, or with so much. You stood by me from the very first, and when one or two fell off to whom I had more reason to look for support, I found you still the same, a sincere and hearty friend from beginning to end. Do not imagine that I forget this, however much I may appear to do so.

"Have they sent you a copy of my 'Summer and Winter Hours?' I left instructions to that effect, but they may have overlooked them, if so, pray mention it the first time you write to Mr. Aitken or Weir, and they will attend to it. The book contains only a selection of my miscellaneous poems. I must do something far higher, and will, if I live. I have a book in the press here—a collection of tales and sketches—most of which have already been in the periodicals. Smith and Elder, who are the publishers, are not sparing expense on getting it up, and it will make a handsome volume. But this confounded Reform Bill, like a great hungry monster, swallows up all literature. I know of several works, ready printed, which are held back till the political excitement subsides,—if it will subside,—of which I see no immediate prospect. For my part, I think the Tories cowards, and the Whigs mad. I am quite sure that the annihilation of twenty thousand of the mob in all the populous towns would do an immense deal of good, and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see Wellington making a progress through the country with a few pieces of artillery for this purpose. I dined a few days ago at the anniversary of the————. About four hundred persons were present—Brougham in the chair, and of all the sleepy methodist minister sort of animals it was ever my lot to see or hear, he is the first. It was the dullest affair altogether I was ever at in my life, though it cost everybody, at the least, two guineas, and some much more. All the literati—so called—of London, were there, and O! Mr. Hogg, they are a pretty set. . . . Woe's me! woe's me! . . . . I dined with a funny enough party a week or two ago. It consisted of Leigh Hunt, Sheridan Knowles, William Kennedy, Lawrence, Mr. Donald and myself. Hunt, poor man, came there complaining of his stomach, and vowing that he led the most temperate life under the sun. He drank, however, like a fish, and has never been out of bed since. You would be glad to hear of the success of Knowles' play. It was triumphant. Have you seen the *Englishman's Magazine*, conducted by Kennedy. I am told they say in Scotland that I am the editor of it. . . . In the meantime do return good for evil, and favour me with a letter as soon as you possibly can, for I shall rejoice to hear from you. . . . With best regards to Mrs. Hogg, I ever am, dear Sir,

"Yours affectly.,

"HENRY G. BELL."

This agreeable letter, full of the literary gossip of the day, brings vividly to our mind the genial writer, as we knew him forty years afterwards, when he was still the warm-hearted gentleman he had been when editor of the *Literary Journal*, and the friend of James Hogg and Christopher North. Henry Glassford Bell ever retained his love and admiration for the Shepherd; and on the occasion of the inauguration, in 1869, of the monument erected to the poet at St. Mary's Loch, he was selected as the most suitable person to officiate at the unveiling of the statue. The post became him well, as the friend and contemporary of the bard, in whose honour the monument had been erected. From the eloquent and feeling speech of Sheriff Bell we quote a few sentences.

". . . Thirty years ago many of those whom I now address knew the Shepherd well. We remember among the things of this life that are worth remembering, his sturdy form, and shrewd, familiar face; his kindly greetings, and his social cheer; his summer angling, and his winter curling; his welcome presence at kirk and market and border game; and above all, we remember how his grey eye sparkled as he sang, in his own simple and unadorned fashion, those rustic ditties in which a manly vigour of sentiment was combined with unexpected grace, sweetness and tenderness. It is now a quarter of a century since he ceased to be seen among us, and since a large assemblage of sorrowing friends bore him past these waters to his grave in Ettrick."

After enumerating several of the poet's works, the speaker continued—"These were some of Hogg's principal achievements, and who shall say that they were insignificant? Surely not you, the shepherds now listening to me, and to whom, after all, I believe, he loved best to sing. At least it was to you he addressed many of his happiest strains:—

very
Prais
Him –

> "Come all ye jolly shepherds,
> That whistle through the glen,

I'll tell you o' a secret,
  That courtiers dinna ken;
What is the greatest bliss,
  That the tongue o' man can name,
'Tis to woo a bonny lassie,
  When the kye comes hame.

"If that and other songs of his have cheered you on the hillside, in sunshine and in storm; if they have helped you to think more delicately of woman's love; if they have made you fonder of the land you live in, and happier in your plaids and bonnets, than some in their ermine and purple, surely they were not insignificant; nay, they were potent for good both now and hereafter. . . . And now that monument is there before you, adding a new feature to this romantic land; announcing to all comers that Scotland never forgets her poets; teaching the lowliest labourer that genius and the rewards of genius are limited to no rank or condition; upholding in its doric and manly simplicity the dignity of humble worth; and bidding the Tweed and the Yarrow, the Ettrick, the Teviot, and the Gala, sparkle more brightly, as 'they roll on their way'; for the Shepherd who murmured by their banks a music sweeter than their own, is to be seen once more by the side of his own Loch Mary. . . . I now declare the statue inaugurated ; and I ask you to let Eltrive Lake, Mount Benger, and Ettrick Pen, hear the welcome you give it."

Since these vivid words were spoken, Henry Glassford Bell has also gone over to the majority, and followed the rest to the "sunless land."

The next letter is from Hogg's tried and true friend, Allan Cunningham. The first part refers to a business transaction, and this we omit.

"27 Lower Belgrave Place,
"23rd Dec., 1828.

"My Dear Friend,

". . . . . I shall therefore, if you agree to this, be glad to have one of those happy and glowing, half-heavenly and half-earthly things, which the author of 'Kilmeny' scatters so brightly from his pen. The name of the 'Anniversary' stands higher than any other annual for its poetry, and do, my dear Shepherd and Poet, lend me your best help to maintain it. A prose tale, as good as your last, will make the fame of my book stedfast and lasting. I have one pleasant story of yours which I think will do to match with the serious one. All this I beg you will not consider in any other light than that of a request, which one poet makes to another whose fame is higher and more widely felt. I assure you it gave me infinite joy to hear your productions praised so highly, and I am sure you will, as a fellow peasant with a soul as high as the highest born, join heart and hand with me in sustaining the glory of the North; and the honour of its Rustic Bards against all Southern opposition.

"You may remember when you wrote to me of Mr. Lockhart's coming to the *Quarterly Review*, that you told me of the [goodness] of his heart, and desired me to take up no man's song against him, but know him and feel him for myself. Your counsel, my dear Poet, was according to my own heart, and in following it I but obeyed my common practice of *roosing* the ford as we ride it. I have found Lockhart one of the best, the kindest, and most unaffected friends I ever met. Now, he is no sayer of sweet and sugary things, which the very vain gape for and swallow, his words are few and to the point, and I have ever found them dictated by kindness and good sense. I like him for this, and for his scorn of all that is mean and sordid. I cannot draw the character as vividly as I feel it, and must drop it.

"God bless you.

"Yours ever and a day,
"ALLAN CUNNINGHAM."

"My wife unites with me in love and good wishes for you and Mrs. Hogg. She is proud, you may be assured, to remember you, and often points to your picture, in a very splendid frame, as her friend, the Ettrick Shepherd.—A. C."

These two poets seemed to have been at one in their love for, and praise of, Sir Walter's accomplished son-in-law, and yet, in a few years after, he cruelly vilified the name of the one poet before the whole world, and wounded the kind soul of the other by the ungenerous attack made on the memory of his friend.

We give here another interesting and kindly letter from Cunningham to his friend James Hogg.

"27 Lower Belgrave Place,
"7th Jan., 1829.

"My Dear Friend,

"I enclose the remaining halves of the notes, which acquit me of all pecuniary obligation, and leave me to pay you a debt of gratitude for your admirable communications at my leisure. I am grieved that you have not received the book which, with a letter, was despatched by my bookseller to you by way of Edinburgh. I annex an order on Mr. Boyd, Sharpe's bookseller, for one, which you will have the goodness to present, in Mrs. Cunningham's name, to her good friend Mrs. James Hogg, with all compliments and commendations which belong to her, for having a husband of fame and name.

"I have all your manuscripts treasured past, and all your letters too. Think not that I would be negligent in a thing so essential. My brother editors may, as they are all 'honourable men,' as Marc Antony says, dispense with such observances, but I love and admire too much whatever original genius produces to loose or destroy it. The domestic 'Prose Tale,' my good friend, is a capital one, and the characters *original,* and you must not allow your memory to influence you against it. I can have no objection to your writing better ones, of which I believe you to be perfectly capable. The poem will indeed be much too long, 12 or 16 pages of 32 lines each will be enough, and write it, if the inspiration suits, in your favourite measure.

"I am glad you have given me the license you have done respecting your communications. You will see by the one in the 'Anniversary' that I have operated on one or two places on account of the limits of my book.

"My wife unites with me in love to Mrs. Hogg and yourself, and pray name us both to your nephew, who was a fine lad, and rather *laithful*[*] for the world.

"I remain, my dear friend,
"in all love and affection,
"Yours ever,
"ALLAN CUNNINGHAM."

"P.S.—If you only write for Pringle and me the £36 offer stands good. If you write for others—and I have no wish to limit you as a friend, when you can put money in your pocket, then the old £25 offer stands good. Think of me as a fellow peasant, whose path is hard up hill, and help me with your best. A. C."

Here follow two interesting letters, one from Sir Walter Scott, the other from Thomas Pringle.

"My Dear Hogg,

". . . . . I had not waited for this catastrophe to do what I would do in the matter of the 'Royal Society of Literature,' to the support of which I consider you so eminently well entitled. I cannot be supposed to have any direct influence with the Society, because, for some reasons which still appear weighty to me, I have declined every proposal to become a member of that body; but I endeavoured to exercise such indirect interest as lay within my power. But the misfortune is, that from the constitution of this learned body there cannot be a promotion to one of the pensions until there is a vacancy, and of that there was no prospect when I was in London. I might otherwise, being upon the spot, have been of some use in making room for you in a circle where, if any one deserves a place, you unquestionably do. I spoke a good deal with Lockhart on the subject, and requested him to lay anchors to windward to get early notice of any vacancy, though I am in no case assured of doing much good unless I was myself in London at the time. It will give me the most sincere pleasure to be of service in this or anything else which can be of service to you, being with sincere good wishes and regard,

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[*] *Laithfow*, bashful.

"Yours truly,
"WALTER SCOTT.

"Edinburgh, 3rd February."

"London, 7 Solly Terrace.
"Claremont Square, June 1, 1831.

"Dear Hogg,

"In two days I shall be again in the press with 'Friendship's Offering,' and I shall be not a little disappointed if I have nothing from you in it.

"Last year the plate for which you wrote was not ready, and the publishers and literary friend in whose hand I left the volume when I went to Scotland did not think your prose tale quite suitable for the book, it seems—its humour, they say, was *too broad.* So I sent the MS., agreeably to your instructions, to Fraser, where it was printed long ago. I sent to Fraser at the same time all that I had from Allan Cunningham, as you directed me to do.

"Now, what I want from you this year is not a prose tale nor a long poem, but three or four short pieces, about a page or a couple of pages each, such as you have once or twice sent me. And if you have not such by you, you will soon screed them off on the sclate if you set about it. And mind, take Mrs. Hogg's counsel as to the subjects and phraseology—for, without any disparagement to you, my friend, I opine that she knows better than you what will suit a lady's work table. . . . .

"Now, dear Hogg, as I hope to have the volume mostly through the press this month, and as I have a strong presentiment, somehow, that this will be the last Annual I shall edit, I hope you will do your very best for me, and help me to come off with flying colours. I do not mean that the Annual is likely to stop—quite the contrary—but I expect to be occupied so entirely by more important concerns, that I shall have no time to give to it.

"I am told you have been quizzing me with other annualists in *Blackwood* this month. I have not yet seen the No., but I do not apprehend anything ill-natured, though I wish you would not drag me into notoriety, which I am not very fond of. Isn't it enough to have been one of the beasts of the Chaldee MS.? You sad, mischievous fellow!

"To turn to a more serious subject—poor Gray! So we have lost him—and a worthier, a kinder, an honester man never lived. I knew him both in good and adverse fortune, and found him always one of the least selfish of Adam's sinful race; with all his failings, when or where shall we meet his like again. I wrote a very long letter to him in my passage up from Leith, giving him all the details of my rambles in Scotland, my visit to you, etc., etc., but he would never receive it. He was gone to a better land. It just strikes me that a short poem upon his death, from your pen, would be a most excellent thing for 'Friendship's Offering.' You would execute it with affectionate earnestness, and in the right tone, and it would be becoming for you to write, and for me to edit it. Do try your hand on it, dear Hogg, and I will perchance attempt a few lines additional. Your good wife, I am sure, would be much gratified. Remember me and my wife, very kindly, to her and the bairns. And pray tell me how you are getting on, and how this weary world uses you. I had always hopes that we might have got 100 guineas per an. from the Royal Society of Literature for you, but it has just been dissolved, to my great disappointment, and the ten Royal Associates deprived of their pensions, and I have been engaged for these two weeks canvassing to get poor Coleridge (who had nothing else to live upon) restored to an annuity upon another fund. We have succeeded, with great difficulty, for, as Sir James Mackintosh writes to me, 'to get a pension or a sinecure from the present ministers is something like trying to pull down the moon.' It is too bad of them, however, be they Whigs or Tories, to reduce the pensions of literary men (and that so trifling in amount) of all others on the pension list, and I have not hesitated to tell them so both in print and by private letters to Rogers, which I knew he would show to Lord Grey.

"By the way, I met Wordsworth for the first time at Rogers' a few weeks ago, and he was speaking of James Gray with great kindness and respect.

"When you write, as I trust you will speedily, I beg that you will tell me truly how Sir Walter really is. We know not what to believe from the newspapers, but when I saw him in October last, he was looking *sair failed*—ten years older than you.

"Yours, Dear Hogg, with all good wishes,

"THO. PRINGLE."

Annexed is a letter from the amiable member of the Society of Friends, William Howitt.

"Nottingham, 12th Mo., 20th, 1828.

"Respected Friend,

"Herewith I forward for thy acceptance two small volumes as a trifling testimony of the high estimation in which we have long held thy writings. So great was our desire to see thee when my wife and I were, a few springs ago, making a scramble on foot through some parts of your beautiful country, that nothing but the most contrary winds and circumstances prevented us.

"I am now preparing for the press 'The Book of the Seasons,' a volume of prose and poetry, intended to furnish the lover of nature with remembrance, and put them in mind on the opening of each month of what he may look for in his garden or his country walks; a notice of all remarkable in the round of the seasons, and the beautiful in scenery, of all that is pleasant in rural sights, sounds, customs and occupations. I hope to make it, if I am spared with health, in a little time both a pleasant and original volume, and one which may do its mite towards strengthening and diffusing that healthful love of nature which is so desirable in a great commercial country like this, when our manufacturing population are daily spreading over its face and cut off themselves from the animating and heart-preserving influences of nature; are also swallowing up our forests and heaths, those free and solitary and picturesque places, which have fostered the soul of poetry in so many of our noble spirits. I quite envy thy residence in so bold and beautiful a region, where the eye and the foot may wander without being offended by monotonous hedge-rows, and abominable factories. If thou could'st give from the ample stores of thy observant mind a slight sketch or two of anything characteristic of the seasons in *mountainous* scenery especially, I should regard them as apples of gold. I am very anxious to know if any particular customs or festivities are kept up in the sheep districts of Scotland at sheep-shearing time, as were wont of old all over England, and where is there a man who could solve such a problem like thyself? I am sensible of the great boldness of my request, but as my object is to promote the love of nature I am willing to believe that I am not more influenced by such a feeling than thou art. I intend to have the book got out in a handsome manner, and to have it illustrated with wood-cuts by the best artists, being more desirous to give to others that evident attachment to the beauties of the country that has clung to me from a boy, and for the promotion of which all our real poets are so distinguished, than to realize much profit. Anything thou could'st send me about your country life, or the impressions which the scenery make upon a poetical mind at different seasons on your heaths, or amongst your hills, I should be proud to acknowledge, and should regard as the gems of my book. Whether or not, however, it be practicable or agreeable to thee, I hope to have the pleasure of presenting thee a copy of the work when it is out. Mary requests me to present to thee her respectful regards, and allow me to subscribe myself, with great respect, thy friend,

" W. Howitt.

" Though I have ventured to make the above request, I must explain myself so far as to say that it is the only request which I have preferred to an author, the book being written by myself.

" W. H.

" James Hogg, Esq."

Letter to Dr. Crichton, Edinr.

" Eltrive Lake, June 22nd., 1830.

" My dear sir,

" I deem it my duty to inform you that we arrived safely at home on Saturday afternoon, and found all well and your little Harriet still in the highest glee; and I do assure you we have left you deeply affected by your disinterested kindness and good humoured forbearance with me when so often allured into late companies. Sociality is so completely interwoven in my nature that I have no power to resist indulging in it, but, I have been blessed by providence with a constitutional forbearance which prevents me from ever indulging in any sinful excess, a blessing for which, circumstanced as I am, I can never be too thankful. . . .

"I left three of *Fraser's Magazines* with you, which please return to Mr. Boyd, George Street, with the enclosed note. We had a most delightful jaunt with Mrs. James S—— and will not soon forget her and little James. I nursed him all the way, for he grew so much attached to me at the very first, that he would not stay a minute from me.

"Compts. to dear sisters and nieces, and believe me, ever yours most affectionately,

"JAMES HOGG."

To the same.

"Altrive Lake, December 12th.

"Dear Dr. Crichton,

"I am ordered by the servants to write directions for three geese!!! I know nothing about the geese, but I direct them to you to do with them as you please. Should this reach you before my Margaret comes away, say we are all well, and a better child than Mary Gray has been both night and day was never seen. I would fain have Harriet home for a while. I have letters from London, New York, Gateshead, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, but no word of one we were most anxious to hear of.

"Yours most affectionately,

"JAMES HOGG."

We also add a letter from Thomas Tod Stoddart, a gentleman long well known in the literary world of Edinburgh, and specially famous for his angling exploits.

"My Dear Sir,

"When I saw you last you mentioned having forwarded an album to me at Edinburgh. Eight weeks have elapsed, and only to-day I received your note, dated 15th May, unaccompanied with my parcel. Both anterior to its arrival and on the instant, I made enquiry at Watson's Inn and the Sign of the Harrow, but in neither of these places obtained any information respecting the above. It must either have been lost, miscarried, or delayed. Your enquiring after it from the carrier himself may throw some light on the subject, as I should rather lose my heart to the young lady than that she should lose her album on account of anything I should feel pleasure in doing, towards the filling up of its pages.

"Mrs. Hogg is, I hope, in good health, and all the family. How is Miss Scott, whom Mr. Brookes so vehemently admired? (Send her my love.) There is nothing active in the literary world. Lockhart was here lately. The Professor is busy at a poem for the *Metropolitan*, and has written some 7000 lines of 'Nebuchadnezar,' which he intends for the press. A poem called 'Fitzraymond,' by a Mr. Anglesey, is remaining without the sale of a single copy on its publisher's hand, though puffed to extremity. I am tolerably busy handling a tragedy on the Poles, which I would give the world to get brought out in Drury Lane. Another poem of mine is commencing the rounds of refusals from the London publishers—'tis called 'Ajalon of the Wind, or a Tale of the Aeronaut.' I hope it will find speedy anchor.

"How goes on the fishing? I presume you may catch them in the Yarrow with your hands. There will be good sport at night in the Loch. I intend taking a tour to the Western Highlands as soon as the rainy weather commences; and in the after part of the year I shall perhaps take Mrs. Forsyth's room for the salmon fishing. Whenever you come to town you can have no excuse for not visiting us, both you and Mrs. Hogg. If you cannot call immediately on your arrival, let me know by line—so that we may not blame ourselves for not seeing you in Bellevue Crescent. With best compliments to Mrs. Hogg,

"Believe me, ever yours,
"THOMAS TOD STODDART.

"Edinburgh, 25th June, 1831.

The annexed letter is from Mr. Robert Montgomery, the author of "Satan," and other poems.

"18th Dec., 1831.
"23 St. Bernard's Crescent.

"My Dear Hogg,

"I am *excessively annoyed* that, owing to the officious interference of Mr. ——, instead of my being on the road to your house, I am seated here truly disappointed, and altogether unfit for anything, except for that poetical employment which Lord Byron's 'Manfred' so often engaged in —'gnashing his teeth in darkness.' The fact is, up to this morning it was arranged that we should be conveyed to you under Mr. S——'s auspices. When the hour of departure comes, our friend, with admirable coolness, informs us that his engagements prevent his accompanying us! The coach left Edinburgh at 9, and all that I can do is to inflict a dull and doleful letter on your patience. I sincerely hope your domestic plans will not be much disarranged by what is to me a bitter disappointment.

"My dear Hogg, one of my principal objects in coming to Scotland was to form a social and personal acquaintance with her men of genius and mind, if I should be found worthy of the honour. I need not therefore say how proud and happy I felt at being placed at your side, and hearing the voice of him whose spirit had so often communed with my own in a distant land. I shall not affect an unreal modesty by saying that the gratification of being known to you was heightened by the assurance that I was not unvalued by him of, in some measure, a kindred mind. The voice of kindness and the eye of sympathy have become almost strange to me. Were my soul not supported by its own undying and unquenchable energies, the infamous system of malice and misrepresentation which some *fourteen* or *fifteen reviewers* have carried on against me during the last year, though it has not martyred one single hope, has rendered me almost callous to sympathy, and deaf to applause. No matter; as Sheridan says—'it is in me, and it shall come out of me.' They shall abuse me more, or praise me more, before I finish my career.

"Is there no hope, no probability, of my yet spending an hour alone with you? . . .

"I trust you will receive this letter in good time. Pray favour me with an immediate reply. I have met Wilson, and we talked about you. God bless you, my dear Hogg, and ever believe me,

"Yours faithful,

"R. MONTGOMERY."

Here is a modest, clever letter from the amiable, but short-lived poet, Robert Gilfillan:—

"Leith, 9th Sept., 1831.

"My Dear Sir,

"I beg to present you with a copy of a small volume of songs which somehow or other I happen to have made,—when or in what way I cannot tell,—but there they are, and a pretty lot you'll find them. The critic chaps nevertheless speak *no ill* of them, and one had the impudence to say that in dashes of Scotch humour I almost approached the Ettrick Shepherd! That was effrontery for you. . . . He deserves after that to be made ride *quarantine* on the Glasgow Goose* for gi'en out sic a foul *bill*. To descend from the gander No. 2, however, I should be proud to get and that honestly a tithe of that fame. I know that a few are not amiss, but will five just men spare the city? There's the rub! I have sent a copy to him of the Palmy Isle,† but a puir, luckless chap like me has nae chance o' a bit notice in Maga. . . .

"I will take it very kind if you will write and tell me what shelf my little tome is placed on. That would speak volumes. For you see I understand that some books without being 'lees frae end to end' are higher exalted on your book-shelf than I have any wish to aspire to, while others rank lower there but higher in your affections. What fosse (see Dante) will you pit puir Gilfillan in?

"You are a happy man, Mr. Hogg, that lives so far from the hue and cry of reform. . . . . One friend told me my songs wouldna do because they were not about the 'great question!' . . .

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* See Noctes.

† Professor Wilson.

On this principle where is 'Kilmeny' and 'Tammie Shanter.'

"Yours very truly,
"ROBT. GILFILLAN."

The next letter is one written by David Vedders, and which tells its own story:—

"Dundee, 6th April, 1832.

"My Dear Hogg,

"Having recently published a little volume of trifles, I cannot resist the temptation of begging your acceptance of an early copy. I know that every provincial rhymster pesters you with presentation copies, yet with the fear of this before mine eyes I have pursued the same line of conduct. One comfort is left you, there is no penalty imposed upon the recipient for neglecting to read it. In the northern parts of Scotland it is the duty of the humble farmer to present a *kain* fowl to the lord of the manor, whether the said fowl be served up on silver at his honour's festive board, or sent down to the kitchen to eke out the fare at an annual jollification of cottars and menials.

"To 'blaw in your lug' at this time of day relative to your genius, etc., would be a waste of wind. All the world knows both what you are and what you have done. This much I will say—aye, and fearlessly—that there is not a human being in the wide world—your own family excepted—who either esteems or loves you more than myself.

"Since the day that you published 'Auld Ettrick John' in the *Old Scots Magazine*, until your last brilliant story in the *Metropolitan*, I have traced your literary progress, and read almost all you have written. Then say, my dear bard, whether I need an introduction to you on this occasion? With an education little better than your own, and with hard labour for my portion until my 25th year, it has been my ambition all my life to do something to distinguish myself in literature; and though I may never soar, no man shall say but I have made an effort.

"That God Almighty may prolong your life for a blessing to your family, and that He may bless the efforts you are at present making for their interest, is the sincere prayer of

"My Dear Hogg,
"Your faithful friend and humble servt.,
"DAVID VEDDER."

The following is of a less literary character, but has an interest of its own :—

"Edinburgh, 13th Dec., 1828.
"James Hogg, Esq., Mount Benger, by Innerleithen.
"Dear Sir,

"Having received a visit from Mr. Johnstone of Alva, I handed to him your letter, with which he seemed very much pleased; at same time, told him you would be glad if he would give you a written permission, which he most readily complied with, and repeated what he said before, that he would be most happy to see you. I was thinking of sending his letter in a small parcel by carrier, but thought it would be better to forward it again to you per post.

"I saw the Duke of Buccleuch yesterday, and if you would wish me to ask the same favour of his Grace, I will do it, which I have not the least doubt will be given as willingly as from Mr. Johnstone.

Although the Duke is much younger than myself, we have been for a considerable time acquainted. I have often carried him in my arms, and more than that, I had the honour to make the first *breeks* he ever wore, and again, I made the last pair that ever his grandfather had, and I doubt not you will think it strange when I tell you the old Duke, about 28 years ago, put me into the arms of George the Third. However wonderful this may appear to you, I can assure you it was actually the case, as I shall explain to you when I next have the pleasure of seeing you.

With kind regards to Mrs. Hogg and family, believe me to be,

"Dear sir,

"Very truly yours,

"JAMES ALISON."

CHAPTER XII.

We have now reached what proved to be the closing years of the poet's life. Many had been the disappointments and anxieties which he had been called on to endure. We already know that his farming operations at Mount Benger were the reverse of successful. He had been rendered all but bankrupt indeed, and it was with a feeling of relief and with true pleasure that he left that farm, and returned to Altrive Lake, the sheltering homestead where he first commenced his housekeeping. Grateful was this change to Hogg and to his partner in life. Here, with her and their five children, he was as happy as a man not altogether free from pecuniary difficulties can be. For the poet was a domestic man. Notwithstanding the constant influx of visitors to which he was subjected, and whose society he enjoyed to the full, never was he happier or more thoroughly contented than when seated at his "ain fire side," with his own family around him. Writing to his wife from Edinburgh in 1830, he says, "I am here in safety, and hope to return in a fortnight. I find that I cannot live here now, except for two or three unhappy days, unless I had my whole family with me, and could get my hours of study, and my nap and my glass with you late at night."

Frequently had the Ettrick Shepherd been urged to visit the great Metropolis, and had come very near doing so at the coronation of George the Fourth, but he refrained, Sir Walter Scott jocularly giving as a reason that Hogg preferred St. Boswell's fair to the coronation! But going to London in those days was not a matter of a few hours. It was an undertaking; and demanded not time and money only, but also considerable determination. To a homely man who had nearly reached his three score years, fond of his own "ingle nook," and whose health had become but indifferent, such an undertaking was apt to assume dimensions somewhat portentous. Now, however, the poet wished to arrange for the publication of his works in a collected form, for the permanent benefit of his family; and with this object in view, and at the advice of many friends, he resolved to undertake the journey. Sore against the grain we know the going was, but yet for the sake of "Margaret and the bairns," what would he not do? So at the close of 1831 he found himself *en route* for London. He writes from "Watson's" on the 22nd December:—

"I have just time to inform you that I sail in the packet 'The Edinburgh Castle,' and as yet there is not one cabin passenger but myself. . . . .

"Keep a good heart, and everything as right as you can; and be assured that you and our darlings shall never be one hour from my mind and heart, and that it is for your sakes alone I have torn myself from you for a short time.

". . . . Kiss all the children for their dear papa, and believe me, &c., &c., "J. H."

"The Edinburgh Castle" does not appear to have been a very expeditious packet, as our poet did not disembark till the 31st.

"London, Jan. 1st, 1832.

"I write, my dearest Margt., the first letter of this year to you. I write it from the lodgings of

P—— and P——, where I landed yesterday, after a most pleasant, but tedious passage. So you may tell my dear boy that his fears for his father were all vain, for that he ran no danger of being drowned, but ate and drank, played at cards, and whistled on his flageolet, took his nap after dinner, and his toddy at night, the same as at home. We put in at the Holy Island, where we lay three days and three nights. We anchored again at Norwich, and again at the mouth of the Thames, so that we put off time terribly. The steward of the vessel, who had got some charges from the owners, paid so much attention to me, that I was utterly ashamed of it—neither would he take any reward, and I am sure I shall never be able to requite him.

I have this day been hearing the Rev. Edward Irving preach and lecture, and though I could not help being deeply affected by his eloquence, his sermon seemed the ravings of enthusiastic madness.

I have seen Cochrane and Lockhart, and everything is likely to be amicably arranged. The Lockharts are in the deepest distress, for besides the death of little Johnnie, Charlotte has fallen down stairs. . . . .

“. . . I shall close this scroll by wishing my dear Margaret and whole family a good new year, and many many happy returns of the season.

“Kiss all the children, and bless them in their father’s name. . . . J. H.”

In the *Morning Chronicle* of 2nd January, 1832, we read :—"James Hogg, the 'Ettrick Shepherd,' arrived in London for the first time. He came from Scotland by sea, on board the Edinburgh Castle smack. Mr. Hogg is in excellent health and spirits, and we are confident his reception in the Metropolis will be worthy the minstrel who sang of

'Mary, Scotland's Queen,
Ere woe had dimmed her face sae fair,
What Mary's palace would have been
Had tyrants never lingered there.'"

So the friends of literature and of Scotland were prepared to give a warm reception to the Scottish Bard, and they did it. Certainly he had no reason to complain in that respect, for as he himself said, "He was like to be eaten up with kindness."

The idea of a collected edition of tales and poems was a good one, and had in it a popular element. Moreover, the project promised to be a lucrative one, and Mr. Hogg was pleased at the appearance of matters, and hopeful as to the result of his visit to London. A young publisher of the name of Cochrane undertook the outbringing of the new work, which was to contain prose selections only, and its title was to be "The Altrive Tales." But the author soon began to have misgivings. It may be that frequent and bitter disappointments caused him to be easily alarmed; at all events he became anxious. He writes to Mrs. Hogg on the 17th January:—

". . . As a 'frank' has just been offered me, I take the opportunity of enclosing you a letter which I think will be interesting to you, and of assuring you that I am in good health, though still far from being in good spirits, for I am afraid that this connection of mine with Mr. Cochrane may turn out a hoax. Several of my literary friends have been hinting to me that he is venturing far beyond his capital. . . Lockhart on the other hand thinks quite the reverse. . . I have had plenty of offers for the work, and if you are all well I am determined not to return to Scotland till I make a fortune, less or more, or put myself at least in the way of one. . . I received your letter last Friday, and a welcome sight it was to me. But you need not write very often if you are all well, and all is going right. God bless you all, and may your blessing still remain on your affectionate husband,

"JAMES HOGG."

How the Ettrick Shepherd was fêted, courted and lionized by the great and the noble, by literary men and literary ladies, by members of Parliament and members of the Stock Exchange, as well as by the booksellers and by lesser people, is written in the chronicles of the day. It is a story that has been so often repeated that it has lost all novelty. And indeed in this latter period of the same century when authors and authoresses are to be met with every day, the account of the reception which the Scottish poet met with in the great city seems almost incredible. It is curious, in turning over the pages of the little pocket-book in which he noted down his engagements, to observe both who his friends were and the different hours at which these friends dined. Mr. Murray, Albemarle Street, a quarter before seven; A. Picken, six o'clock; Allan Cunningham, the more homely five o'clock; R. P. Gillies, six o'clock, and so on.

The Duke of Sussex, Lord Saltoun, Hon. K. H. Fraser, Macleod of Macleod, John Galt, George Cruickshank, Mr. S. C. Hall, Sir George Warrender, Mr. Ruskin of Herne Hill, father of

John Ruskin, J. G. Lockhart, The Beef Steak Club, The Literary Club, Neil Gow, and many others are among his entertainers. Then we can fancy what a rare night that had been on which he dined at Neil Gow's. What playing of Scotch airs!

On 10th January he writes—

"Notwithstanding of all the caressing I have met with, which is perfectly ridiculous, I hate London, and I do not think that either flattery or profit can ever make me love it. It is so boundless that I cannot for my life get out of it, nor can I find any one place that I want. But there is one great comfort, and it is the only one that cheers me, I shall soon get out of it and return to my dear family, as my friends Cunningham, Lockhart, and Pringle are going to take the charge of the press off my hands, and I have arrangements made for each volume which will take some time, and which I can only do here where every scattered fragment can be laid hold of; but when my time has been so much cut up I have got very little done indeed. I never get home before three in the morning, and have been very much in the same sort of society. I have been with Lockhart, Jerdan, Captain Burns, Pringle, Cochrane, Murray, and last night I was with Martin, the sublime painter, and the list of the great literary names and those of artists would of itself fill up this whole letter.

"I have the little manual of prayers and hymns for my children in the press, and will send each of them a copy this week. Be sure to write me all about them, and how each of them is coming on. How many salmon James has killed, and if he continues to be a good boy, whether he or Jessie are beating at the Latin, and all about dear Maggy, poor little Hetty and sweet Mary. . . .

"I cannot describe to you how cheerless and desolate I feel so far separated from my family. If it were not absolutely necessary to make a struggle in order to better our fortunes a little, I could not bear it. I am very helpless, and would require putting to rights almost every day. . . My stockings all full of holes, nor do I know where to get them mended." . . .

As a rule men are not very comfortable when away from their wives, especially when they are such wives as was Mrs. Hogg. As will be seen from the extracts given, she was one in whom "the heart of her husband could safely trust," and the Shepherd's home at Altrive Lake was the centre round which all his affections and emotions moved. The little manual referred to was a small publication entitled "A Father's New Year's Gift." It was dedicated to his children in the following letter, printed at the beginning.

"My Dearest Children,

"As a small token of assurance that you are never from my remembrance, and likewise as a hint that I wish you to remember me, I send you this little New Year's present, in hopes that I shall hear you recite them all beautifully and impressively on your knees before your Maker on my return. Receive also with it the most fervent blessing of your affectionate father,

"JAMES HOGG.

"London, January 1st, 1832."

The little token of affection, prompted by his great love for his children, and we think by his earnest wish that they should be good and God-fearing, contained several prayers and hymns. He knew that he could trust her who had been often his own gentle monitor, and whose mild and womanly ways had toned down so many of his own roughnesses during the ten years they had lived together. "Teach them to be like yourself, Margaret," is what the poet would have wished; so to aid her in this good work he sent the booklet of prayers and hymns. The prayers are devout and appropriate, and might have emanated from the pen of the best Presbyterian divine. The hymns we also like well.

Mrs. Hogg wrote to her husband on 22nd January, always the same wise, gentle, prudent counsellor as she continued to be to all her family till God took her. She says "I hope you will leave it (London) before you get too fond of it. I need not tell you how much we are all wearying for you back. If possible I weary more now than at first, because I think that you should be talking of coming home. You must arrange your plans in London, come home and put them in execution, as I don't suppose you can have time to collect your thoughts. . . . Endeavour to collect all your scraps which cannot be had here, that may be useful in the publication. Leave before you are threadbare. I do not exactly mean your coat, but leave the Londoners something to guess at. By-the-by, the coat is no joke either, for you are apt to wear it too long. Take care not to do so. Buy a good new one and whatever article of dress you require. By no means appear shabby. . . . I should rather wear a worse gown than you should appear in a shabby coat. It is pitiful to think of your going about with great holes in your stockings."

In another letter his wife tells him how one of the little girls at home wept like to break her heart, because her papa was going with holes in his stockings.

The following letter was written by Hogg, in view of the literary banquet which was about to be given in his honour, in London.

"Waterloo Place, Jan. 21st, 1832.

"My dearest and best beloved Margaret,

"I enclose you £10, which I received from Mr. Fraser yesterday, which you must try to make go as far as you can. . . . I will send you more when I get it, for situated as I am here, I have very little ado with money. I have no news save that I am very well. Indeed it is almost a miracle that I keep my health so well, considering the life that I lead, for I am out at parties every night until far in the morning. . . . You will see that a great literary dinner is to be given me on Wednesday, my birth-day, for though the name of

Burns is necessarily coupled with mine, the dinner has been set on foot solely to bring me forward and give me *eclat* in the eyes of the public, thereby to inspire an extensive sale of my forthcoming work. It was mooted by Lockhart, Murray, Jerdan and Galt, who have managed the whole business, and will be such a meeting as was never in London. . . . But do not be afraid, for vain as I am, it will not turn my head; on the contrary, it has rather made me melancholy, and I wish it were fairly over. Sir John Malcolm has been chosen to the first chair, and Lord Leveson Gower to the second, and among the stewards there are upwards of twenty noblemen and baronets. And all this to do honour to a poor old shepherd."

Then follow directions regarding the children, which show that his shrewd good sense had enabled him to form a correct estimate of their several characters, an estimate which time has proved to have been correct, and which some of them, now grey-haired men and women, may not care to hear of. Hogg then goes on in the same kind, but sensible strain to his wife :—

"Now my good dear woman, you have a heavy charge of such a family and farm left upon your head for a season, but I have no fears for your good management. Do not sit late, nor lie long, and you will see all the better into your household affairs and your children's behaviour. Give my kind love to Mr. B. and Mr. P., and tell all the servants that I was asking for their health and good behaviour.

"James Hogg.

"Bless all the children in my name."

Regarding the subject referred to in the above letter, we cannot do better than give the following extract from the *Morning Chronicle* of 26th January, 1832 :—

"Scotch Literary Festival.

"Yesterday, at Free Mason's Hall, there was a public dinner to celebrate the birth-day of Robert Burns. The circumstance of the Ettrick Shepherd, whose birth-day falls also on the 25th January, being now for the first time in town, suggested the propriety of holding the festival upon a larger scale than usual. Lieutenant-General Sir John Malcolm, G.C.B. in the chair."

This entertainment proved quite an ovation in honour of Hogg. The large hall was crowded, and many applicants for admission had to be refused.

The following letter from the poet to his wife gives his own account of the proceedings, and, on referring to the reports in the newspapers of the day, it does not appear to be overstated in any way. And it seems to us most natural that he should have written exactly as he did to Mrs. Hogg, whom he well knew would be hungering in her mountain home for news of how her husband had acquitted himself, and how he had been received at the much talked of "Literary Festival."

"As I have just received your letter this minute, I cannot resist answering it, for where the heart is there the thoughts must turn. I know you will have received other two letters before this, but nevertheless, I must write and tell you that the great Literary Festival is over, and that this most memorable scene of my life should have happened in my sixtieth year and at the very time of the evening when I was born, I cannot help viewing myself as a little extraordinary. I was always fond of flattery and never denied it, at least to you, but if I have not got my fill of it now, even to fulsomeness and running over I never shall be satisfied again.

"General Sir John Malcolm was in the chair, and acquitted himself only too well. I was on his right hand and supported by two lords, four baronets, and a whole row of generals, chiefs of clans and all the literature of the Metropolis. I was the hero of the evening, and every gentleman and nobleman ended with some encomiums of me, Lockhart in particular abounded with them. It was a glorious speech, but is said to be badly reported in the papers this morning, &c., &c.

"But any of this morning's papers will give you a better account of it than I can do in a single sheet. Sir John Hay, Mr. Pringle of Yair, and many intimate friends were present. I have as yet only seen the *Times* of this morning. It reports my speech very ill, but confesses that my provincial dialect rendered the last parts unintelligible to them, and afraid of mangling them, they were obliged to pass them over. It says 'The Shepherd is a bluff, fresh-looking man, apparently about forty-eight years of age, of rather a homely appearance but with a face expressive of much shrewdness and good humour.'

. . . . . .

"My situation is altogether intolerable with respect to visitors. I am sure I have received in the last three days three hundred invitations to dinner, and I fear I have accepted too many of them.

"Mrs. —— is a complete lady. She was in the hall last night, for strange to say the galleries were filled with ladies, many of them of high rank, which I thought a very curious thing, that ladies should be admitted in hundreds merely to *smell* a good dinner, without being permitted either to eat or drink. . . .

"I have had calls from two ladies since I began to write, a Miss Chambers and Lady M'Kenzie. If I had you to receive all these grand people and keep me right, I could live here, but as it is, it is impossible. . . .

"There was a Mr. Broadhurst last night sang a song very beautifully which had been made for the occasion, and related to our love and happiness, the concluding line of each verse was 'For I loe my Maggie an' dear she loes me.' I do not know who was the writer, probably Allan Cunningham. . .

"J. H."

It was business and not pleasure that had taken the Shepherd to London, but the work, which was in preparation, seems to have made unusually slow progress, and he writes from time to time complaining of the delay which was growing every day more irksome to him. All this dissipation, however gratifying it may have been, was not suited to a plain country man, nor conducive to the pursuit of literary work. Mrs. Hogg at Eltrive Lake was growing weary too of the long separation; and to her in yon distant and lonely Yarrow, the separation appeared more trying now, as news came from time to time of the ravages which cholera was making in the Metropolis. We can imagine the wife's anxiety for her husband, exposed as he was to the unusual mode of life, late hours, and rich wines such as she in her simple life must have deemed all but destructive to the uninitiated visitor. But Mrs. Hogg was brave and made no complaint. He wrote to her on 17th February :—

"I received your letter only within this hour, and I cannot tell you how much I was wearying for it, nor how great satisfaction it has given me. I think of nothing with any delight, but of my return home; and all the delight I have in being here is the satisfaction that I am doing all that I can for those who are nearest and dearest to me in the world. I enclose you another £10, and I should think my journey to London well bestowed if it was for no more than the pleasure of sending my dear woman these £20. . . . Blessed be God for his kindness in preserving you all in good health, and may he continue to be your guide and protector. I am for my own part exceedingly well, indeed I never was better; and although completely in the public, and generally in great companies, I never spent a more sober winter season. The people here are all sober; there being no deep drinking here, as in Scotland; and you will think it strange when I assure you that in this great overgrown metropolis for these last six weeks, night and day, Sunday and Saturday, I have not seen one drunk person—neither poor nor rich.

"My mode of living is this,—when invited, I accept on condition that there is not to be a party. 'Oh no! there shall be no party, just a few friends, merely a family party.' Well, I go at seven o'clock, no fashionable dinners before that. By the time we get a few glasses of wine drunk, the rapping at the door begins and continues without intermission for an hour and a half. Then we go up stairs and find both drawing-rooms crammed as full as ever you saw sheep in a fold. And then I am brought in and shown, like any other wild beast, all the ladies curtseying and flattering and begging for one shake of my hand. Such flummery I never saw in this world, and every night I am taken in this way. . . . In fact the public dinners are the most agreeable. I have dined in many of these. "The Literary Fund Society" gave me a dinner, etc. I dine with the Highland Society of London to-morrow, the Duke of Gordon and Lord Sutton in the chairs. Yesterday I dined with Mrs. Gow, when I met with many *kent* faces."

The same letter says, "I am grown quite gray in the head, for want of sleep; I get no sleep to speak of."

Mrs. Hogg writes to him on Feb. 24, 1832 :—

> ". . . We are all disappointed that you do not say when we may expect you home. That terrible disease with which the Almighty has seen fit to afflict the country has reached London or its near neighbourhood. You are, I know, under His powerful protection there as much as anywhere else, yet I cannot help feeling great anxiety about you. You know my nerve is none of the strongest, but I hope I shall be enabled to place all my confidence in an all-wise Providence who will stay the trouble in His own good time. . . It gives me great satisfaction to hear you are so well and healthy, and that there is *little* drinking. You are so much out, I was afraid you might be exposed to that sort of thing, which is so dangerous at this time. As for your hair having got gray, I suspect it is only that you have a better opportunity of seeing yourself in your *grand mirrors.* You know I often told you how gray you had got; however, we shall be glad to have you back though your hair has changed its colour."

holera

Then after some business items, follow the little domestic news so dear to the heart of the absent father, which we shall venture to quote, although the gentle, modest writer would have shrunk from the idea of her letter being ever given to the world. "Mr. Park* is continuing to do well, and I daresay the people are quite satisfied with him. Maggy is much improved in reading, Jessie is doing wonders at the Latin. James has not been well for some time. . . Really I think he is sick for want of you. He won't try the fishing. I shall enclose this to Lord Mahon. Now be sure to take care of yourself and write immediately, and do try to fix a time for coming home. . . ."

In the *Morning Chronicle* of February 23, the following paragraph appears :—"The Highland Society of London gave a dinner to the Ettrick Shepherd on Saturday at the Freemasons' Tavern, where the Bard was welcomed by his countrymen with the most friendly congratulations. After the routine toasts of the evening, the President, Sir George Murray, proposed the health of Mr. Hogg in a speech of great energy, defining the obstacles against which he had to contend, and which he had at last, fairly surmounted: and as some acknowledgment of the estimation in which the Society held him for his numberless loyal and patriotic songs and poems, he (Sir George), by appointment of the Society, admitted him an honorary member thereof, and at the same time presented him with a splendid silver medal, which he hung round the Shepherd's neck."

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* The Teacher in Mount Benger School.

This was all very well, but in the meantime the work which had mainly been the Poet's object in coming to the metropolis was not progressing; and although the first forebodings as to the stability of the publisher's credit seem to have died away, it was still a fact that the "Altrive Tales" were not yet out of the press. And from time to time mutterings of dissatisfaction appear in his letters as to the cause of the delay. The friends on whose advice he acted, of whom J. G. Lockhart and Allan Cunningham were the chief, deeming that all was right, reassured the suspicious author. They undertook to see the work through the press, and so let the homesick Poet home to his hills and his Yarrow, which he loved better than that mighty world of stone and lime in which he had met with so much attention. On March 14th he writes :—" My publication has not proceeded one step these two weeks. I cannot understand it. . . . I have gotten an invitation to dine with the Duke of Sussex, His Majesty's brother and the heir to the crown of Hanover." On the 10th he writes :—

" Dearest Margaret,

I send you a single line to-day merely to say I am very well, and that I never had my health better, and that I think I shall be home with you about the end of this month or the first week of the next, but I shall write before leaving London. I am quite sick of it. You know I was always fond of flattery and approbation, but I have at length lived to be overpowered with it; and though it would be in all your interests that I should remain here, I feel that I must leave everything and return to the bosom of my family, and very little richer than when I left you; still I have set things in motion. . . . The cholera is raging terribly here now, but do not say a word about that to James, else it will kill him. How I am longing to have you all, one by one, in my arms again. Bestow a benediction on every one of our dear dear children in their father's name, and kiss each of them for me, etc., etc.

"J. H."

The next and last of the series is dated 23rd March, and is merely a few lines to fix the day of his leaving London, and sums up with the words, "I am positively worried with kindness, so that I do not know what to do first. I positively will not come to London again without you."

The following letter from the hand of Mrs. S. C. Hall, although without date, belongs to the period of Hogg's stay in London.

"59 Sloane Street,
"Wednesday.

"I am indeed sorry, dear sir, to hear that you are about to leave London without our having the pleasure of again seeing you in our wee house. I had no idea you would depart so soon,—and we did not like to intrude our invitations on you, until you had disposed of those of so much more consequence. I am delighted to hear that your *first* is not to be your last visit, and then I hope you will have a little leisure to spend at Sloane Street.

"You take with you the best and kindest wishes we can give, and though they are but as drops in the ocean of friendly feeling that I am sure accompanies you everywhere, yet I am sure also that you are too great an admirer of nature not to like—aye, and even value,—dew-drops in their proper place.

"We, who see heather only on painted hills, and inhale good substantial fog instead of the fresh and pure mountain breeze, may well be excused if we envy you the 'rale' health, and the 'rale' breeze of bonny Scotland.

"You ought to bring Mrs. Hogg with you the next time you come. Will you give her my kind regards, which I hope she will accept from an admirer of Scotland, and of Scottish folk. I shall make a point of singing 'Come o'er the stream, Charlie,' for you when you come again; and I assure you Carter* (who by the bye is no great judge of music), says I sing it very well already. I am told you are writing a hymn for my little book. Thank you, dear sir. Your hymns for children are exquisite, and you are very good indeed to think of it for me.

"Always yours, truly obliged,

"ANNA MARIA HALL.

"James Hogg, Esq."

Let us draw the curtain, and respect the privacy of the family meeting, but we can easily picture the happiness of the home-sick Shepherd, when he once more found himself seated by his own hearth with his little ones clustering round.

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* Mr. S. C. Hall.

Hogg had not been many weeks home when the cause of the delay in publishing the "Altrive Tales" became known. His forebodings had been too well founded, and the long journey and his anxious labours had been in vain. The first volume made its appearance on the 31st of March 1832, and then —the publisher became insolvent! Disappointment upon disappointment! And perhaps this was the hardest and bitterest of all, for he had been spending his strength, and his money, and his time, which to him meant money, and all, as it now so sadly appeared, for nothing. The world sympathized with the poet it is true, but that did not and could not retrieve lost time and lost opportunity. On April 27th a friend writes:—"I felt and expressed in my family some qualms about your position, but I hoped and still hope that you with characteristic national caution were proceeding on satisfactory security. Finding, however, that he (the publisher) had implicated Campbell, and, as Campbell says, everybody, I feel increased solicitude about you, aware of the importance of this enterprise of the 'Altrive Tales' to you."

But even before this unfortunate failure of the publisher, the story of the Shepherd's life and his anxious labour had drawn towards him no little sympathy. The following extract is from a letter from Thomas Pringle, who was associated with him during the early years of "Maga" and was written during Hogg's stay in London:—

"If ever I can be in any shape useful to you, my kind auld friend, command me freely. I passed Waterloo Place yesterday in a cab, but was hurried by business, and I also thought it charity not to waste your time merely to chat. My friend Leitch Ritchie has sent a letter to the *Morning Herald* about you, and I am to meet some literary friends at his house to-morrow evening to consider as to what can be done (with delicacy and propriety) to save our country from further disgrace in *your case.* Disgrace enough is already on our head for Burns and Bloomfield, and for many others.

"Yours ever, dear Hogg,

"THOS. PRINGLE."

The following letter is from Sir R. Phillips, a gentleman to whom Hogg was afterwards indebted for many acts of friendly interference regarding the publication of the work here alluded to :—

"Dear Sir,

"Before I had the pleasure to see you I regarded you as one of the nobles of nature whose distinctions far exceed in value and pre-eminence those conferred by any royal patents, which generally proceed from the intrigues of puny courtiers. When I saw you in London, you answered in character, in frankness, and in good feeling, what one ought to expect from a noble of nature, and now in reading the account of yourself in the first volume of your 'Altrive Tales,' I am stimulated by their piquancy, originality, and naiveté in declaring as a duty from man to man that you have, in this last trial of your character, maintained my respect, admiration, and esteem.

"I am induced thus to employ the first piece of stray paper on my table—the fittest for a noble of nature, but the least fit for a mere court noble—to express my feelings, because my sympathy is specially aroused by what has been passing within a few days at the house of your publishers.* . .

"Having then, Sir, lost above £30,000 by two failures in the city in December, 1825, and feeling a strong interest in your behalf, I cannot refrain from apprizing you of these circumstances. They may be of consequence to you, or, as I hope, they may be of none. Whether the information is in time to be useful is also another question, but it has been the reading of your memoirs, and particularly p. 109, which has moved me to write to you. At your convenience you may inform me how it has befallen you, and if better than I fear, it will have afforded me the opportunity of stating how sincerely I am,

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* The failure of Mr. Cochrane.

"Your attached friend,

"R. PHILLIPS.

"45 Brompton Row, April 27th, 1832."

We know not if this was the first intimation of the thunderclap of misfortune which had burst on the head of the poet of Yarrow. If it were so, the friendly tone of the writer of the above must have soothed the crushed spirit of the unfortunate victim of over speculation on the part of his publisher.

The following letter is from Mr. Hogg himself to Mr. John McDonald :—

"Altrive Lake, May 3rd, 1832.

"My Dear Sir,

"After thinking over all my friends in London I cannot fix on one, who, I think, has either more activity or willingness to do me a kind service. Mr. Cochrane is broken, and what is to be done? We stand thus. There are 3000 copies of the first vol. of 'The Altrive Tales' printed. But there is only an edition of 1000 published, so that the remaining 2000 are not, and never have been entered on Messrs. Cochrane & Coy.'s stock. They belong to me. Indeed the whole that are unsold belong to me, for our bargain was money, or bill and security, before publication of any volume or any edition, and the bargain not implemented, the publisher had no claim on the edition farther than the price of paper and print. Consequently the bargain is *not* implemented in any point of it, save that £30 was given me to account. This therefore might be done without losing time. Secure the copies for me, and consign them over to some other house, or sell for me on commission with this imprint on the title: 'in the interim printed and published for the author and sold for him by,' etc., etc. The house to which these are consigned (and I would prefer Smith, Elder & Coy.) will be obliged to give security to the trustee on the estate for the expense of paper and printing. I will desire my sincerely attached friend, Mr. Thomas Pringle, of the Anti-Slavery Society's office, to call on you, or you may call on him, as he is lame, and close in your vicinity. You will find him active and indefatigable beyond measure. But be sure to do all things in peace and quietness, and in perfect understanding with those you have to do with, and Mr. Cochrane himself, who I am sure will join with you in saving what reversion for me he can. Neither do I think there is an individual in London who will stand out against my interest, considering the painful way in which I have been inveigled. It has embarrassed me very much at this time, having depended on a certain and regular supply and being wholly prostrated. It is singular how unlucky I am; however, I hope all will ultimately turn out well.

In the meantime the work *must* go on for my behoof at the rate of a new volume every two months. The Tales and arrangements are in Mr. Cochrane's hand, who will deliver them to Mr. Pringle and you in the meantime, and I leave it to you two to make what arrangements you please with my new publisher whoever he may be. I think there is matter in Mr. Cochrane's hands for about seven volumes, and I have at least five more here even cancelling the half. I would like if Mr. Pringle and you would call on Sir Richard Phillips, 45 Brompton Row, who has written me most affectionately on the subject. There is no man in the world has had so much experience in these matters as he, and his advice may avail me very much. I have told him that you will call. By the bye, I think I shall not write to Mr. Pringle to-day, and, for fear of losing any time, I shall not even enclose this under a frank, the members being much scattered. Will you therefore be so kind as call on him and consult together. You will find him a real fine fellow and both judicious and active. My written conditions are 'One fifth share of the retail price for all impressions above 2,000 before publication, at six months credit with security, and only one sixth share of lesser impressions.' Now, certain that you will do all for me that you can,

"I remain,
"My Dear John,
"Yours most affectionately,
"James Hogg.
"To John McDonald, Esq."

We also give here another letter from the same to the same, very much on the same topic.

"Altrive Lake, June 13th, 1832.

"My Dear Sir,

"As I had some part of the Tale to alter, I do not get it put off to Edinburgh till to-morrow, when I will give directions that it shall be forwarded to you with the first coach parcel. Now this *must* be the first Tale in the second volume for most particular reasons, which will be evident to you by and bye. But the worst thing is that it will derange my present arrangement for this Tale, and 'The Brownie of Bodsbeck' will be too much for one volume, therefore you will be obliged to take a shorter Tale to follow this, which I think must be

'The Wool Gatherers' or the 'Bridge of Polmood' from the Winter Evening Tales; or any one that Pringle or you like from that work or the Shepherd's Calendar. It will be queer if I bring you in to be an Editor and a literary man without any intentions on your part, but merely out of friendship to a luckless wight who really deserves a better fate. As I have not yet received your answer to my last relating to Messrs. Elder and Smith's offer, I shall refrain from any farther instructions at present. But there is one thing which you may hint to them, or whoever you agree with, that they shall be at liberty to drop the work whenever it fails to pay them and me, and so long as it does, I shall carry on the series, if I keep in life and health.

"You have never told me if you are coming to Scotland this summer. If you come be assured you shall receive a hearty welcome here at all events. When you land at Edinburgh take a seat in the Peebles coach to Peebles and then to Innerleithen, six miles on, and then you must hire a gig over to me seven miles, which about London is reckoned as nothing. You will start from Edinburgh at *nine* and dine with me at half-past four. Be sure to write often, you cannot write too often, as my sheet anchor is at present ruled by you. As long as Parliament sits you can never want plenty of franks.

"Some of those who have proffered to be the medium of communication between my friends and me, are Lord Mahon, Sir John Hay, Alexander Pringle, Sir George Warrender, Duncan Davidson, and almost any peer or member for Scotland that is contiguous to you. But when the Parliament breaks up, by sending them to Mr. John Christie, Admiralty Office, under cover, you will get letters, proofs or parcels of any sort franked.

"I remain, dear Mac,
"Yours ever,
"JAMES HOGG.

"To J. McDonald, Esq."

After the return of Mr. Hogg from London, he received a number of letters from literary persons, whose acquaintance he had formed during his stay in the Metropolis. Some of these may interest the reader. The first we subjoin is from Mr. Ruskin, father of the now celebrated John Ruskin. Additional interest attaches to this letter, as it refers to the son of the writer.

"Herne Hill, near London,
"22nd Janry., 1834.

"My Dear Sir,

"It is long since I was favoured by our friend Mr. Elder with a sight of part of a letter of January, 1833, in which you very kindly enquire after my son and myself, and if I had not deemed it intrusive, I should sooner have thanked you. I cannot say what has now led me to do what I have so long deferred, unless it may be sundry hints from our wife, and niece, and son, who all indulge in periodical remembrances of the delight your only too short visit offered them.

"Touching my son, there are many to whom I would never name him or his pursuits; but to men of talent and of heart I find I can say many things that I dare not tell the world at large. It cannot comprehend; it has not patience, nor feeling, nor delicacy. It shall not be entrusted with my weaknesses, because I am not yet willing to be laughed out of them. To you I will venture to say that the youth you were kind enough to notice, gives promise of very considerable talent. His faculty of composition is unbounded, without, however, any very strong indication of originality. He writes verse and prose perpetually, check him as we will. Last summer we spent four months in Switzerland and Italy, of which tour every scene is sketched in verse or prose, or picture.

"I have seen productions of youth far superior, and of earlier date, but the rapidity of composition is to us (unlearned in the ways of the learned) quite wonderful. He is now between 14 and 15, and has indited thousands of lines. That I may not select, I send his last 80 or 100 lines, produced in one hour, while he waited for me in the city.

"Do not suppose we are fostering a poetical plant or genius, to say *we keep a poet.* It is impossible for any parents to make less of a gift than we do of this, firstly, from its small intrinsic value, as yet unsuspected in him; and next, because we dread the sacrifice of our offspring by making him a victim to the pangs of despised verse, a sacrifice to a thankless world, who read, admire, and trample on the greatest and the best.

"I was sorry to hear you had been suffering from inflammation in the chest. . . I should like to see your works coming forward in better hands. A good substantial bookseller would lessen your anxiety and mend your health. You began your memoir so well, that I feel quite enraged at the stupid bookseller for breaking at such a crisis.

"I would say, put not your trust in booksellers; cash is the word. But the knaves are despotic, and deal in rags of bills at four months' date. . .

"JOHN RUSKIN."

In the following month, a letter from the youth between fourteen and fifteen, follows that from his father. It is written in a beautiful fair hand, resembling copperplate; but that is nearly half a century ago, and the youthful versifier is one of the veterans in the field of literary conquest, one of the greatest, who has not been *trampled* on.

"Herne Hill, near London,
"13th Feb., 1834.

"Sir,

"I cannot sufficiently thank you for your kind, your delightful invitation, one which it would have been such a pleasure, such an honour for me to have accepted. Yet I cannot at this period make up my mind to leave my parents even for a short time. Hitherto I have scarcely left them for a day, and I wish to be with them as much as possible, till it is necessary for me to go to the university. Yet your offer to me of course is one of the most tempting that could possibly have occurred for many, very many reasons. I love Scotland, I love the sight and the thought of the blue hills, for among them I have passed some of the happiest days of my short life; and although these days have passed away like a summer-cloud, and the beings who gave them their pleasantness are in Heaven, yet the very name of Scotland is sweet to me, for it calls back recollections of times which were exceeding pleasant, and which can never more return to me. Yet I speak only of a part of the North Countrie, I have forgotten the braes of Yarrow and the banks of Tweed, and to wander among the holmes and hills of lovely Ettrick with one to whom they and Scotland owe much, very much of their celebrity, and to find brothers in his children (for if the children have the loving-kindness of the father they would be sisters and brothers to me) this would indeed be more than I can well tell of pleasure. But it is best not to think of it, for it must not be, for as I before said, I do not wish to leave my parents, and they are equally tenacious of me, and so I can do little but thank you again, again, and thrice again.

I am grieved you should have taken so much trouble and thrown away so much of your valuable time in the examination of my very worthless rhymes. I fear you are too lenient a critic, and that Mr. Marshall is in the right when he says I have imitated Scott and Byron. I have read Byron with wonder, and Scott with delight, they have caused me many a day-dream and night-dream, and it is difficult to prevent yourself from imitating what you admire. I can only say that the imitation was unintentional, but I fear with me almost unavoidable. I only wish the imitation was nearer the original. If I could write one piece of poetry in my lifetime at all resembling the description of the battle of Flodden field, I think toward the conclusion of Marmion, it would be enough honour for me. Please give my love to your young shepherdesses and their brother, for I can love them though I have not seen them, and believe me to remain, Sir,

"Respectfully and affectionately yours,

"JOHN RUSKIN (Jr.)."

We know so much of Hogg's publishing speculations, and we have so often mentioned his losses, that one may perhaps be led to wonder how he lived, and how his family were supported. And so it must be borne in mind, indeed, it seems but necessary to draw attention to the fact, that he wrote steadily for *Blackwood* and other magazines as well as for the *Annuals* of the day. These without exception paid him well. Even at this time of day, when brain work is so cheap, the magazines pay better than other branches of literature, and it was by no means a rare thing for Hogg to receive a handsome remittance from Mr. Blackwood for a poem or a story in "Maga."

Mrs. Hogg used to tell how on one occasion an old, but to the poet a valuable horse, sunk in the moss, the horse's death being the unfortunate result. On Mrs. Hogg bewailing the loss, he said, "Don't vex yourself Margaret, I'll soon get another horse." He sat down and wrote an account of the disaster, in his own graphic style, sent it to one of the magazines, and got in exchange a most substantial remittance. We have thought it but right to make mention of these facts, which go to show that though there was much cloud in the poet's life, there was also, not unfrequently, "a silver lining."

CHAPTER XIII.

1832.

We suppose that the following letter, which is without date, was written in 1832, after Hogg's return from London.

"Albemarle Street, June 26.

"My Dear Sir,

"I am happy to inform you that the subscriptions for the 'Queen's Wake' have thriven so well that my father is already able to make over to you £100, for which sum he begs you to draw upon him at sight. Many private individuals and most of the public prints have interested themselves in the cause, and I trust that our list of names will go on increasing for some time yet.

"One person (an artist who takes portraits in the Strand), Field is, I believe, his name, has been civil enough to offer us your portrait to face the title page.

. . . . . .

"Poor Sir Walter still lies in nearly the same sad state. It is some satisfaction to know that he suffers no pain.

"We were happy to hear of your safe return home, and hope that yourself and Mrs. Hogg, and the family are well. With best compliments to you from my father,

"I am, my dear Sir,
"very sincerely yours,
"J. MURRAY, Jr.

"James Hogg, Esq."

His own country,—we may say the world at large,—sustained a great loss when in the autumn of this year, 1832, Sir Walter Scott died. He had lived to reach his much-loved Abbotsford, and there he expired on the 21st of September. When Scotland came to know that her mighty minstrel was no more, and that his magic pen would conjure no longer, she mourned with a deep, and true, and heartfelt mourning, for her greatest son,—the poet, historian, and novelist. Well might she say that the mighty had fallen. Many sorrowed, but none more sincerely than James Hogg, who had known him intimately and loved him dearly for thirty years.

On June 21st, 1832, Mr. Lockhart wrote to Mr. Hogg:—

"My Dear Hogg,

"You will be as much grieved I believe, as most people in this weary world, to hear that our good friend Sir Walter is now laid on a bed from which there is little hope of his ever rising. He had a new shock in Holland ten days ago, and has not as yet shown symptoms of recovery. His family are all with him, and, except poor Anne, whose nerves have been overstrained, as well as could be looked for, under those sad circumstances."

In September the end came. The first meeting between Sir Walter, and the Ettrick Shepherd, the two minstrels who had made the "Forest" ring with their lyrics and their songs, has been already described,* and now we give the Shepherd's own account of the last.

"The last time I saw his loved and honoured face, was at the little inn on my own farm in the autumn of 1830.† He sent me word that he was to pass on such a day, on his way from Drumlanrig Castle to Abbotsford, but he was sorry he could not call at Eltrive to see Mrs. Hogg and the bairns, it being so far off the way. I accordingly waited at the inn and handed him out of the carriage. His daughter was with him, but we left her at the inn, and walked slowly down the way as far as Mount Bengerburn . . He leaned on my shoulder all the way, and did me the honour of saying that he never leaned on a firmer or a surer.

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* See p. 43.

† Now the Gordon Arms, which seems to have been built by Hogg in 1821. See letter of his in "Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents," vol. ii., p. 362.

"We talked of many things, past, present and to come, but both his memory and outward calculation appeared to me then to be considerably decayed. I cannot tell what it was, but there was something in his manner that distressed me. He often changed the subject very abruptly, and he never laughed. He expressed the deepest concern for my welfare and success in life, more than I had ever heard him do before, and all mixed with sorrow for my misfortunes. . . .

"When I handed him into the coach that day, he said something to me, which in the confusion of parting I forgot; and though I tried to recollect the words the next minute I could not and never could again. It was something to the purport, that it would be long ere he leaned so far on my shoulder again. . . . After this I never saw him again."

A touching little story of a visit paid by Sir Walter to Mount Benger, which the Shepherd tells, may here be given. Mrs. Hogg entertained a sincere love and admiration for Sir Walter. "There was one day," says Hogg, "when he was dining with us at Mount Benger, on going away, he snatched up my little daughter, Margaret Laidlaw, and kissed her, and then laying his hand on her head, said, 'God Almighty bless you, my dear child,' on which my wife burst into tears. On my coming back from seeing him into the carriage that stood at the base of the hill, I said 'What ailed you, Margaret?' 'O,' said she, 'I thought if he had but done the same to them all, I do not know what in the world I would not have given."

As early as 1810 the Shepherd had dedicated the "Mountain Bard" to Scott.

"Blessed be his generous heart, for aye,
He told me where the relic lay;
Pointed my way with ready will
Afar on Ettrick's wildest hill;
Watched my first notes with curious eye,
And wondered at my minstrelsy;
He little weaned a parent's tongue,
Such strains had o'er my cradle sung."

When a baronetcy was conferred on the author of *Waverley*, he addressed a poem to Sir Walter as follows :—

"LINES TO SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

"Sound my old harp thy boldest key,
To strains of high festivity!
Cans't thou be silent in the brake,
Loitering by Altrive's mountain lake,
When he who gave the hand its sway
That now has tuned thee many a day,
Has gained thee honours trulier won
Than e'er by sword of Albyn's son;
High guerdon of a soul refined,
The meed of an exalted mind.

"Well suits such wreath thy loyal head,
My counsellor, and friend indeed.
Though hard through life I've press'd my way
For many a chill and joyous day,
Since I have lived enrapt to hail
My sovereign's worth, my friend's avail,
And see, what more I prize than gain,
Our forest bard, the bays obtain,
I'll ween I have not lived in vain.

. . . . .

"Yes twenty years have come and fled,
Since we two met, and time has shed
His riming honours o'er each brow—
My state the same, how chang'd art thou!
But every year yet overpast,
I've loved thee dearer than the last."

. . . . . .

"Scarce sounds the name as't did before
Walter, the Abbot, now no more;
Well—let it be—I'll not repine
But love the title, since 'tis thine.
Long brook thy honours, firm to stand
As Eildon rock; and that thy land,
The first ere won by dint of rhyme,
May bear thy name till latest time,

And stretch from bourne of Abbot's lea,
To Phillhope Cross and Eildon Tree,
Is the heart's wish of one who's still
Thy grateful Shepherd of the hill."

In 1828 Mr. J. G. Lockhart published a life of Robert Burns. The volume bore the following inscription :—

> "To James Hogg and Allan Cunningham this volume is inscribed in testimony of admiration and esteem."

It was a becoming, but unsolicited tribute of respect, and no doubt the two bards felt gratified by the compliment paid them.

At that period a considerable degree of intimacy existed between Mr. Lockhart and Hogg. In his frequent visits to Abbotsford, he was thrown much into the society of Sir Walter's talented, if not very amiable, son-in-law. An interesting memento of one of those gatherings at Abbotsford is a picture from the pencil of the late Stewart Watson, of which the following is the history as given by Mr. Watson in 1839 :—

"Many years ago I received an invitation to visit Abbotsford for the purpose of painting miniatures of Sir Walter Scott and his family. These miniatures are now in possession of Lady Scott (widow of Colonel Sir Walter Scott), through whose kindness in placing them at my disposal, I have been enabled to paint a picture. I had long thought of representing a scene which took place during my visit. Sir Walter, accompanied by Mr. John Lockhart and the other members of his family, also a few friends then residing at Abbotsford, paid a visit to Newark Tower, for the purpose of showing the classic district to Miss Edgeworth. This party forms the subject of my picture." And in a note he indicates the persons represented—who are, Mr. Archibald Constable, Mr. James Hogg (the Ettrick Shepherd), Mr. Lockhart, Sir Walter Scott, Miss Ann Scott, Mrs. Lockhart, Miss Edgeworth, Miss Scott (niece), Miss Edgeworth's sister, Mr. Thomas Scott, and Mr. C. Shortreed.

In June, 1832, Mr. Lockhart wrote to Mr. Hogg, as we have seen, referring to Sir Walter's illness; and professing himself at all times much interested in the worldly affairs of the Shepherd, which were at that period more than usually unprosperous, owing to the failure of his publisher. He writes again on September 23, 1833 :—

"My Dear Hogg,

"I was pleased to see your handwriting once more this morning, but regretted to find that your affairs are not as they ought to be. . . . .

"I am sorry to hear what you say as to health. From some paragraphs in the papers, I had supposed you to be the old man at jolly dinners with Colonel Ferguson and so forth, and I still hope you were only grumbling a little. . . . For myself, I was much exhausted and enfeebled a few weeks ago, but a little tour on the Continent, from which I am just returned, seems to have set me all to rights again. I expect my wife and children this evening, and trust they are as well as possible. Charles Scott is here, and better than I ever saw him. Walter is under orders at Cork, for Portugal, and in high vigour.

"'Tis a pity you and Ebony could not patch up your senseless dispute. . . . I am glad to hear that Wilson and you, at least, are on friendly terms again. . . . I knew that could not last long. God knows friends are dropping so fast into the grave, that we had need to think well before we suffer estrangement to arise among those that are left.

"I never hear from Laidlaw, but sometimes from Mr. and Mrs. Mackenzie, both of whom value and love him. I hope he is as well and happy as he ever could be away from Ettrick Forest, where I also have left all my local affections buried and lost. Poor John Galt is so ill. . . . .

"Give my love to Mrs. Hogg and your little beauties, and believe me ever sincerely your friend,

"J. G. LOCKHART."

Three years go by, and then James Hogg followed his friend the great novelist "into the silent land." We have seen how the Shepherd mourned for the Baronet; and that his sorrow was sincere, we are well assured. When both were dead, the great Wizard of Abbotsford, the scholarly gentleman who prided himself not less on his ancestry than on his works, and the humbler, untaught Shepherd who gloried in his descent from the weird, wiry old hill folk—when both were dead, and all self-defence on Hogg's part had become impossible, then it was that the ungenerous pen of J. G. Lockhart assailed the now silent poet of Ettrick. Without any apparent cause Scott's son-in-law became not only the enemy but the virulent detractor of Hogg's good name. So slender was the foundation upon which he grounded his antipathy that one is led to marvel how even the "scorpion pen of J. G. Lockhart" could have ventured to formulate such bitter words about one for whom, up to the close of his life, he had professed esteem, one, too, whom Sir Walter had always regarded with such friendship and consideration as might have been expected from his genial, large hearted-nature. Lockhart was brilliant, witty, and clever, but the breadth of soul and large-hearted generosity, which characterized Sir Walter Scott, were lacking in him. It would have been a greater marvel still than that he was a poet and a genius, had James Hogg, reared as he was among the wild hills and glens of Ettrick Forest, come ready made from that Forest, a finished gentleman like Mr. J. G. Lockhart. But one thing is certain, and that is, that the ill-mannered lout, which his false friend represented him to be, he was not. This has been abundantly shown from the writings of many of his contemporaries; and now hear what Robert Chambers says of him.

After describing a wonderful supper party given by Hogg in Watson's Inn in the Candlemaker Row, Mr. Chambers says, "The Shepherd now reposes beneath the soil of his native Ettrick, all the sorrows and joys of his checkered career hushed with his own breath, and

'Not a stone to point pale Scotia's way
To pour her sorrows o'er her poet's dust.'

While thus recalling for the amusement of an idle hour, some of the whimsical scenes in which we have met James Hogg, let it not be supposed that we think of him only with a regard to his homely manners, the social good nature, and the unimportant foibles by which he was characterized. The world amidst which he moved was but too apt, especially of late years, to regard him in those lights alone, forgetting that beneath his rustic plaid there beat one of the kindest and most unperverted of hearts, while his bonnet covered the head from which had sprung 'Kilmeny' and 'Donald M'Donald.' Hogg as an untutored man was a prodigy, much more so than Burns, who had comparatively a good education; and now that he is dead and gone, we look around in vain for a living hand capable of waking the national lyre. The time will probably come when this inspired rustic will be more justly appreciated."

CHAPTER XIV.

FEELING as he did in his own experience that the lack of education is a terrible want, the kindly heart of the Ettrick Shepherd prompted him to do what he could, so that at all events the opportunity of getting to school might be placed within easy reach of those who were rising up in the neighbourhood around him. As has been already told, his own educational advantages had been scanty in the extreme. Six months at school and no more! Kind reader, do you not think that Dame Fortune must have dispensed her favours to the embryo poet with a somewhat niggard and chary hand! Long before he had attained to the blessed thirteen years prescribed by the school boards of to-day, James Hogg was earning his own living; his "education," so far as it was to consist in going to school, being completed when he was seven. When he attained to the age of forty years, he found himself at last acknowledged as a poet, also we may say as a gentleman, but as a scholar, never. Proud and gratified he naturally was, but none the less did he sorrow for the past, and regret the long years when his muse lay dormant and unfruitful. Painfully was he conscious of his want of more and higher education; and he tells us that at twenty-five he wept because he had forgotten *how* to write.

The parish school of Yarrow was distant nine or ten miles from the upper part of the parish, and at that time there was no other school to which the youth of the parish could go. The farm of Mount Benger was mid-way between the parish school and St. Mary's Loch, and upon the farm there was a half-ruined hut. This unpretending edifice the poet at his own expense put into repair, and had it opened, under the charge of a teacher, as a side school. The attendance varied from twenty to forty, and the children of course paid fees, each also bringing in winter a *peat* daily, as his or her contribution of fuel. The bringing of a peat for the school fire was a custom which very generally obtained in districts where peats were to be had, in the days of the old parish schools. Mr. Hogg, as his contribution towards keeping up the school undertook to give the teacher board and lodging, and he continued to do this till his death. Several of the young men, who came to Mount Benger to teach this little school, lived to fill respectable, nay, honourable positions in the world. When first it was organised, none of the poet's own children was old enough to benefit by the proximity of the school to their home at Mount Benger, but afterwards when James and his sisters were more advanced they joined the other children in the homely little hut, within which good sound teaching was to be had. And we are sure that many fathers and mothers, whether still living in Yarrow or now scattered abroad, have good cause to think kindly of the Ettrick Shepherd for bringing that education to their doors, which would otherwise have been difficult to procure.

The school at Mount Benger prospered. In after years when the Shepherd's head was laid low, an old friend of his, a farmer in the parish of Yarrow, gave a sum of money to endow it; to which a second sum was added by another friend. Subsequently the Duke of Buccleuch and other heritors built a neat school-house, a short way beyond the site of the old clay bigging, to which the little boys and girls had gone carrying their peats, in the Bard's time. The reader may see the new school a hundred yards or so from the "Gordon Arms," as he passes up from Selkirk to lone St. Mary's Lake. There he will also see the handsome farm house of Eltrive Lake, now called Eldinhope, on the opposite side of Yarrow.

But not one stone upon another of the old house at Mount Benger is now left standing. When a new house was built, quite near, a corner of the old one was left on the top of the "Knowe," which, being overgrown with ivy, presented a picturesque feature in the landscape. One day, however, during a heavy shower, the tenant took refuge under such protection as the ruin afforded, when, as ill luck would have it, a stone falling, grazed or at least alarmed the unfortunate successor of James Hogg. "That sanna happen again at any rate," said he, and forthwith ordered his servants to go forth with pick and spade, crying "raze it, raze it." This, it is said to their credit, they declined to do, but the farmer himself, in the true Philistine spirit, took up the implements and swept away the old relic. We may presume that the then tenant of Mount Benger had not inhaled enough of the romance, which is said to linger in the air of Yarrow, to appreciate the poetic ground on which he stood.

Dr. Charles Marshall, now of Saltcoats, Ayrshire, at one time taught the school at Mount Benger, living, as the other teachers did, with Mr. Hogg. He has kindly put into our hands some reminiscences of his residence there, and of his intercourse with his host, which cannot fail to interest the reader.

"At the time to which my recollections of Yarrow refer, the leading spirit of the district was James Hogg, the pastoral poet, usually designated the Ettrick Shepherd, from the anonymous signature he attached to his early contributions to Magazine literature. . . . With this remarkable man I became acquainted in the latter years of his life, in the year, in fact, immediately succeeding the death of Sir Walter Scott, while I was residing at Innerleithen in the capacity of usher in the parish school. . . . Being then at an age when the love of poetry and literature is usually strong, I mentioned to Mr. Robert Boyd, the secretary of the St. Ronan's Border Club, and an old friend and correspondent both of Sir Walter Scott and the Ettrick Shepherd, my great admiration of Hogg's poetry, and my desire to be introduced to him. Mr. Boyd, who was on terms of intimacy with Hogg, promised to take me to Yarrow soon for a day's fishing, and there could be no delicacy in calling on the poet, everybody called at Eltrive Lake; but in the meanwhile he could not do it, as the poet's time was mainly taken up with two relatives, medical men in the East India Company's service, then at home in delicate health and on furlough; they, he said, were somewhat inaccessible,—we had better wait till they left. On the very day on which this conversation took place, I received a note from Mr. Boyd, stating that he would be glad to see me down to his house to supper, as Mr. Hogg had unexpectedly come over and wished to see me. I made my appearance at the hour of supper with great punctuality, and was duly introduced to the poet. I daresay at that time of day I thought myself more honoured by being in the company of the author of 'Kilmeny,' 'Donald M'Donald,' and a hundred songs of which the memory crowded on me, than if I had been admitted into the presence of William IV. then reigning. He was not, however, the sort of person in whose presence you felt awe. He had seen so much of the world that he could at once adapt his conversation to the circumstances and feelings of those with whom he conversed. During the hour of supper any little reserve that might at a first interview exist, wore off, and we spoke as if we had been acquainted for a long while. I mentioned to him my first introduction to his poetry. He very good naturedly recited the 'Witch of Fife' from beginning to end; and stated that in the first edition of the 'Queen's Wake' the story had a different termination, the poor auld man the witch's husband, was actually burned as a wizard at Carlisle, but that, on the remonstrance of Sir Walter Scott, he had altered the catastrophe by letting the man escape through the intervention of his wife, who had lent him the enchanted broom on which to fly through the air :—

'His arms were spread, and his head was heiche,
  And his feet stuck out behind;
And the labies o' the auld man's coat
  Were wauffin' in the wind.'

I spoke of the bygone popularity of 'Donald M'Donald.' He sang that fine patriotic lyric with Miss Boyd's accompaniment on the piano. Reference was made to the 'Kye comes hame,' he had sung it so often that he was fairly *stawed* with it; but he would do so again to please Miss Boyd, and he performed his promise. 'Now,' said he, 'I'll sing you one of my songs that's worth a' the rest put together. When I was with Sir Walter, he aye cried for't between the toddy and the candles,' and on this he voluntarily sang 'I'll no wake wi' Annie,' a song which he somewhere states he composed while sailing on St. Mary's Lake, without assistance from writing materials. A short while after this interview I received a letter from Mr. Hogg, asking me to come over and make myself generally useful in his establishment, with which I gladly complied. My duties were somewhat miscellaneous, but very easy and pleasant. I was tutor to his children, I was his amanuensis and copying clerk, and probably the most onerous task I had was a somewhat ridiculous one. Hogg was very much bored by brother bards sending him their lucubrations, printed and manuscript, for his opinion and admiration. Among other authors soliciting his notice, came John Stuart Blackie, then fresh from his converse with the 'broad browed thinkers of Bonn upon the Rhine,' calling with a letter of introduction from Blackwood, and a copy of his first publication—a translation of Goethe's 'Faust.' My work was to peruse the volume, or at least so much of it as enabled him to state in writing or orally his opinion, which was ordinarily as flattering as circumstances would admit. One of my first jobs in this line was to read up Robert Montgomery's 'Satan' and 'Oxford' for his judgment. These books and relative letters had long lain over, and I had scarcely read them when in came Mr. Robert Montgomery himself. He remained several days, and somewhat abruptly asked Hogg what he thought of his poems. 'I daresay, Robert, they're gey gude, but I never a' my life could thole college poetry—its a' sae desperate stupid.' The inaccessible brothers, Drs. Gray, were there still, but instead of their realizing Mr. Boyd's description of them, I found them the warmest-hearted, scholarlike, and gentlemanlike men I have ever met, with a strong bent towards classical learning which they have inherited from their father, who was one of the masters of the High School of Edinburgh, and afterwards chaplain to a converted Indian prince. . . . . During the time I remained in Yarrow, I saw a good deal of literary society. Professor Wilson, during one of these summers, lived at Thirlestane Castle, after Lord Napier went out on an embassy to China. Thirlestane was only eight miles distant, and the Professor usually called as he passed to and from Edinburgh. He did not walk as I did, and as his sons did from Edinburgh; but if he chanced to have a friend coming along with him (which was frequently the case), they hired a horse, and one of them rode some miles ahead of the other, then fastening the horse to a tree travelled on till the other came up, mounted the animal and overtook his companion. Thus they alternately rode and walked; and this process they called ride and tie. The Professor proceeded in this way with the then young men who subsequently became his sons-in-law—John Thomson Gordon, Sheriff of Aberdeen and Edinburgh; Professor Ferrier of St. Andrews; and Professor Aytoun, of Edinburgh. During their sojourn at Thirlestane they relaxed their minds considerably from the severe studies which led to their subsequent success in life. All of them were passionately fond of fishing. . . .

"I particularly remember one evening when Wilson called on his way to Thirlestane, he having been in Edinburgh to superintend the publication of the current number of *Blackwood.* We told him that 'Johnnie' Richmond, the minister of Southdean, was there before him, he having just called on his way to Thirlestane, where he stated he intended to remain the night with his old friend the Professor. 'I wont go home to-night,' said Wilson decidedly, and he kept his resolution. Hogg and I sat over a glass of toddy with him till midnight. Hogg, with all the good nature imaginable, induced him to talk much more to his young assistant (as he called me), than he would otherwise have done; and when to me talk he *must*, to please his host, our conversation turned on the series of papers on Homer and the Greek tragedians, which were then in the course of publication in *Blackwood.*

"I vividly recal the events of another evening. The party consisted of Hogg, William Motherwell, the poet, and Mr. Archibald Fullarton, the Glasgow publisher, they having come to Eltrive to complete some arrangements regarding an edition of Burns which was to be published by Fullarton, under the joint editorship of Hogg and Motherwell. For years I had been familiar with Motherwell's beautiful lyrics—the 'Jeanie Morrison,' 'The Sword Chant of Thorstein Raudi,' and other Goethe-like gems of a thoughtful, dreamy cast. I was prepared to find a man of the *Il Penseroso* or melancholy *Jaques* class. In society, however, Motherwell affected to care for neither literature, nor sentimentalism, nor song; his great ambition was to shine as a wit, and to talk politics—for he was at the time editor of the *Glasgow Courier*. The first Reform Bill had just passed. Motherwell, of course, was a keen Constitutionalist and Tory; Hogg was so too, or affected to be; while Fullarton was a steady-going Whig of the old school. The two Tories denounced in no measured terms the revolutionary tendency of the law, while Mr. Fullarton as strenuously defended it. 'It's bad walking,' said the Shepherd, 'when the sole of the shoe turns uppermost.' 'True, true,' rejoined Fullarton; 'but it's more difficult still to walk on the crown of your head, Mr. Hogg—try it when you like.' This was a clincher that could not be gainsaid, and put an end to politics for the night. . . . .

"That evening has ever since been suggestive of solemn thoughts to me. Hogg, Motherwell, and Fullarton, were all then apparently in good health, but in the course of six weeks all were in their graves.

"Late of a summer evening a tall, emaciated figure was seen turning off the Thirlestane road on the way to Eltrive. As the miserable, ill-clad object approached, the keen eye of Mrs. Hogg saw at once that she was in for an additional visitor for one night at least. As he drew near, and had crossed the small wooden bridge leading to the house, he went down on his knees and lifted his hands in the attitude of devotion. Some of us went down to see who he could be, but he was in such a state of intoxication that we could not make out his name, nor anything else than this, that he had come to worship at the shrine of the Shepherd. As he could not be admitted into the house, even if there had been room—for besides the ordinary occupants, Professor Wilson's family, Tom Tod Stoddart, and others of the party were there—there was no redress but to put the drunken admirer of genius to sleep with old Donald in the cow house. Next morning being Sunday, he was sober, and sent in a message by the girl who carried him his breakfast, that he would like a book to read. She took him a volume of 'Boston,' but he returned it, expressing a wish to have something in the languages. I sent him a Gaelic New Testament, but neither did this please him; he wanted Greek or Latin. This aroused curiosity, and Stoddart and John Thomson Gordon went down to examine what unearthly creature they had lighted on. They knew him at once; it was William

Mayne, a person of cultivated taste and fine poetical mind, who had bid defiance to the efforts of Henry Glassford Bell, and others who appreciated his powers, to keep him right. So far had he fallen, that from occupying a position of trust in a writer's office in Glasgow, he had gone into the streets, and was frequently found in the Trongate and Candleriggs, selling or singing ballads in broad sheets. They had not heard of him for months, but he had been a kind of butt of Stoddart's, and he addressed him—'Come now, Mayne, let the Shepherd hear you repeat your favourite poem.' Pleased at being asked, he stretched his miserable frame to its utmost capacity, and recited in a wild chant, with many gesticulations,—

I thought that the grave was a sweeter part
  Where ane would rest in a sounder sleep;
I thought that upon the tender heart
  The cauldness wadna lie sae deep.
I used to think when I wont to lie
  By the dykeside on the mossy brae,
Wi' my e'en turned up to the bonny blue sky
  Where the wee wreathy clouds sae peacefully lay—
When I felt the summer breath warm on my face,
  And o'er me was coming slumber deep—
That the grave was sic another place,
  Where ane wud lie down in as sweet a sleep.

But I see nae mair the heaven's gladsome light,
  And nae mair I feel the sweet breath o' the sky;
And black and heavy on my sight,
  The calm dead airs o' the dungeon lie.

*   *   *   *   *

I wish I were up ance mair to drink
The fresh breath o' heaven frae the healthy plain,
And see the wee stars as they blythesomely blink,
And hear the sweet voice o' a friend again.

On leaving, the party contributed a small sum of money for his immediate wants. He said he was going to Berwick to ask for a cast in a smack to London, where he was sure of wealth arising from his literary labours; but although we subsequently made enquiry, we heard no more of him that could be depended on as fact. The report went that he did embark for London; and that he died or was drowned on the voyage.

"In the last year of Hogg's life I went with him to Edinburgh. We lived at the Shepherd's ancient hostelry, David Watson's Harrow Inn, in the Candlemaker Row. We walked through the great thoroughfares together, but so long a period had elapsed since he had been much in the metropolis, that with the exception of Robert Chambers, John Johnstone, and a few others, no one recognised him.

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"As an illustration of the manner in which I learned from Hogg many curious items of literary history, I may mention that he detailed to me his interview with Robert Tannahill, immediately prior to the melancholy fate of the author of 'Gloomy Winter' and many of our finest Scotch songs. Hogg, I have mentioned, or should have mentioned, was an ardent disciple of Izaak Walton. In his piscatory excursions I often accompanied him, and carried a fishing rod, though usually I killed more time than fish, and was especially dexterous in hooking trees. The last trout—a fine, large, yellow fin—I brought to land, I dragged out of a deep sluggish pool, twenty yards below Mount Benger Bridge. As the poor trout lay gasping on the bank, Hogg looked in the water and said to me, 'That pool aye reminds me o' the pool of the Cart in which poor Tannahill drowned himself. Do you mind the story?' I remarked, 'No; he died before I was born.' 'Well,' he continued, 'I once travelled all the way from Edinburgh to Paisley *allenarly** (that was an old Scotch word Hogg used often) to see him. I supposed that when I arrived in Paisley I had only to ask for Tannahill the poet, but to my astonishment nobody knew who he was. I was sent from one Tannahill to another, and many others, but none of them the object of my search. At last I found him on his loom, one of a long range; he was a swarthy man, bearing no external indication of the intellectual lava tide that slumbered in his soul. I told him my *nom-de-plume*, and I have never forgotten the look of absolute bewilderment with which he regarded me, as I told him how far I had come just to look upon him, and that now I was before him with the same feelings as when

> 'Jonson sat in Drummond's classic shade.'

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* *Allenarly*, alone or for the sole purpose.

During the whole of that night we sat together, and he sang many of his choicest melodies. We were accompanied only by one individual, a full namesake of yours; and when Mr. Boyd mentioned your name to me, I was anxious to make your acquaintance, for I conjectured you might be his son. In the morning, I was about to start by the coach for Glasgow on my way home. Being somewhat late, I required to run some distance. Tannahill ran by my side. When about to part, he grasped my hand convulsively, and burst into tears. I said, 'Hoot, Robert, dinna tak' things so serious; we shall often meet again; and if you'll no come to Edinburgh to visit me, I'll come back to Paisley to see you.' 'No, Hogg,' he replied, 'this has been the proudest day of my life; but it cannot be'—and with this sobs choked his utterance. I had scarcely reached Edinburgh before I read in the newspapers an account of his sad end."

CHAPTER XV.

1833—35.

By some of Hogg's numerous biographers it has been said that the grevious disappointment brought about by the failure of his London publisher sat lightly on him, and but little affected his buoyant spirits. Singularly light-hearted by nature, it is certainly true that he was not a man likely to sit down and bemoan the calamities which had overtaken him. But these calamities had been neither few nor small, and he felt them keenly. When he went to London in the fond hope of being able to make some provision for his family, he told his wife to "keep a good heart" in her solitude, and, following his own counsel, Hogg did himself "keep a good heart" before the world. But nevertheless the stroke fell heavy, and he felt the disappointment so much, that his hitherto good health came to be affected. From this time he complained of failing health, and in 1833, writing to his friend Mr. Grieve, he says "I am sorry to say, that I feel that the best days of my writing are over." During the years thirty-two and thirty-three he produced no new work, but did not cease to write steadily for various periodicals.

Eltrive Lake continued as ever to be a constant resort of visitors from many a clime and of every degree, and to none did the genial Shepherd deny himself. It is indeed to be regretted that he allowed his time to be thus broken in upon by visitors. The limited dimensions of the cottage precluded the possibility of seclusion, and the distractions of society are certainly not in favour of producing good work. Nevertheless he found time to write a series of essays on good manners, which was published by Fraser of London in 1834, under the title of "Lay Sermons by the Ettrick Shepherd." An old lady in the parish of Yarrow, to whom the author presented a copy of this work on condition that she should read one of the sermons every Sabbath, did not express any very enthusiastic appreciation of them, for on being asked if she had kept the condition, she replied "Tweel, na. They're no for Sabbath-day's reading." We hope the old lady was a too severe critic, for the late Rev. Dr. James Russell of Yarrow, an old friend of the author, of "Lay Sermons," and one well qualified to judge, is not of the same opinion as his parishioner ; on the contrary, he says "excepting the introduction of a few amusing anecdotes, illustrations and personal recollections of himself and friends, not quite in keeping with the ordinary idea of a sermon this criticism, (the old lady's), is somewhat severe. The volume breathes a deep feeling of reverence for the doctrines of revelation, and has many shrewd observations on human life, while it is full of good practical advice for the guidance of old and young." Upon the whole the volume was well received, and although it has now met with the fate which awaits too many sermons, that of being forgotten, it was not unworthy of being remembered. The *Athenæum* concludes a lengthened criticism of this work with the words, "We repeat that Mr. Hogg's volume is sound and sensible, and a few more personal illustrations would have made it highly interesting," while the *Atlas* and other papers spoke in highly eulogistic terms of this rather unlooked for volume from the pen of the Ettrick Shepherd.

The Rev. James Russell, D.D., of whom we have just made mention, was son of Dr. Robert Russell, who at the time of which we are writing was minister of the parish of Yarrow. In the fulness of time the son succeeded the father, and Mr. Russell was for many years the well known and much loved pastor of that parish. He died at the manse of Yarrow in 1883, and in Dr. James Russell, so long chaplain to the Royal Commissioner at the General Assembly, many lost a warm friend. When a young man Mr. Russell having applied to Mr. Hogg for a testimonial for some purpose, received from him the following :—

"Eltrive Lake, Dec., 7, 1833.

"I have known Mr. James Russell intimately from his boyhood, and have marked his whole progress in learning with admiration. I esteem him very highly as an associate, a gentleman, and a sound and elegant preacher of the gospel of Jesus: and I venture my credit that, with the blessing of God, he will prove a most useful and profitable pastor to any congregation both by example and precept.

"JAMES HOGG."

This brief but characteristic note shows much of the warm-hearted, reverent spirit which characterized its writer. To this period also belongs the following letter, addressed to Dr. William Gray, H.E.I.C.S.

"Eltrive, Novr. 26th, 1833.

"My dear Willie,

"I have no news. We are all well, but I got a terrible fright last week. As we were going over to Edinhope on a stormy night, Margaret (Mrs. Hogg) fell over the bridge. Yes, fell over the bridge, head foremost, at the very highest, lighting among large stones, and her head and breast in the water. I had her up in my arms in two seconds or so, but for a good space she could neither stand nor walk. She was hurt almost over the whole body, her hands, arms, and face, but not one of the wounds was dangerous, and she is now going about as brisk as ever. We have been wearying terribly to see P— C—, but, as I see stormy weather manifestly approaching, I dare hardly advise it at present for his own comfort. I wonder if he has gotten the long letters I sent him to Calcutta. I suspect not. Give our kindest love to him, however, and we will be happy of a long visit, if it suits his convenience now or at any time. There is one thing you must do for me, William, and you must not neglect. Tell Maggie Phillips and Miss D— that the notice they have taken of Mr. —* has made him perfectly insufferable. He lords it over the whole house and neighbourhood, holding us all as dust and sand compared with him. This must be checked. Each of them must write him a note, telling him they are engaged, and are done with him for ever. If they could make him believe it was James Gray, the humility would be complete. I am sorry for your poor dogs standing tied up that way ; but there is no help for it. I took the gun and gave them a walk up to the loch yesterday, but it was with the greatest difficulty I could keep them from running off. They were twice close at the height, running straight on in spite of all I could roar. I was at the Duke of Buccleuch's birthday yesterday, and am nothing the worse. Indeed I am very well. I never regretted anybody leaving me so much as you—at least no man body. But I think I shall write a great deal more.

"Yours most affectly.,
"JAMES HOGG."

Dr. Gray was a nephew of Mrs. Hogg, and while on furlough from India spent part of his time at Eltrive Lake. Between him and its inmates, young and old, there existed a warm affection. He was a son of Mr. James Gray, late of the High School, and married, before returning to the East, his young cousin Maggy Phillips, mentioned in the above letter.

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* A gentleman of weak intellect who boarded at Eltrive for some years.

There can be no doubt that the Poet was failing about this time, or felt himself doing so. The following letters which passed between him and Robert Gilfillan possess an interest :—

"Leith, 12th January, 1834.

"My dear Mr. Hogg,

"My friend Mr. S—, a young man of considerable talents, intends to publish a volume of Tales, his own and the contributions of other literary writers. Now, if it is not asking too much of you, I would feel particularly obliged if you have any piece past you, that you are not making a better use of, that you would give it to Mr. S— for his collection. He will more fully develop his plans to you himself, but rest assured I will not forget the favour if you find opportunity to grant it.

"I am, my dear sir,
"Yours very truly,
"Robt. Gilfillan."

"Eltrive Lake, 25th Jany., 1834.

"Dear Gilfillan,

"After the failure of 'The Club Book' in London, I dare not venture into a joint work again. I would willingly spend a week any time for the benefit of a young enthusiast in literature, but to stand prominent in a work that may probably be damned, is very disagreeable. This has three times been my lot, and I am all but resolved it shall never happen to me again. It is best, as Sir Walter Scott said, to let every herring hang by its own head. In 'The Club Book' I thought I had the best associates in Britain, and so they were, but I suppose regarding their pieces as eleemosynary, they were all below par, and I conceived myself very ill-used.

"As this is the 64th anniversary of my birth, you need not expect much more from the old Shepherd. Yet I feel my head as clear as ever, although the enthusiasm of love and poetry is sorely abated. I, however, have a good and sterling assistant and successor in you. I think I could greatly improve a number of your songs by the alteration of a very few words. As I send this by a private hand, it will likely reach you to-night. If so, all your kind family must drink many happy returns of this day to me.

"Yours most affectionately,

"JAMES HOGG."

St. Paul says that charity suffereth long and thinketh no evil, and it would appear that Hogg was largely imbued with this spirit of charity. Strange as it may seem to us, and imprudent as it assuredly was, he entered a second time into publishing arrangements with Mr. Cochrane, from whose failure he had experienced such disastrous results. We are told from our infancy that "burnt bairns dread the fire;" the Bard of Yarrow had been severely burned, yet went once more into the fire. But he was not an ordinary trader, and we fear sometimes lacked ordinary prudence. At all events, Mr. Cochrane having resumed business, he was again entrusted with a new series of tales, under the name of the "Montrose Tales."

The work was brought out in two volumes in 1835, and met with a cordial reception. In a few months after its publication, the publisher again failed in business, and once more the wonted lack of fortune attended the Shepherd in his endeavours to retrieve the past. But alas! This last disaster fell not on himself, but upon those who survived him. Before the last stroke came he was beyond the reach of commercial disappointment or earthly distinction. He too had passed from "sunshine to the sunless land."

As we have said, the Bard's health had been failing ever since his return from London. From time to time medical advice had been sought. Discouraging symptoms had appeared, and much anxiety was felt among his friends.

We might before this have made mention of Robert Hogg, nephew to the subject of this memoir. He was a young man of great promise, and of some little note as a poet. He was the eldest son of the Shepherd's eldest brother, William, and having shown an early love of learning and of letters, was sent to college at Edinburgh. His uncle's name insured his becoming acquainted with men of letters, and he acted for some time as amanuensis to Sir Walter Scott. He was afterwards employed in the printing establishment of Ballantyne, and also both as contributor and corrector of the press to William and Robert Chambers.

Unfortunately he was doomed to an early death. The fell disease of consumption having attacked him, he died in 1834. The following simple letter was written to his distinguished relative, in the year preceding his own death :—

"Stobo Hope, October 31, 1833.

"Dear Sir,

"Your letter gave me sincere pleasure in all respects, except what relates to your own health. We are all deeply grieved to hear of your being so unwell, but trust you will recruit, and above all, that one so able to speak consolation to others will find comfort to himself, derived from that source whence alone comfort can flow to those who are afflicted. I have both of your complaints—the cough and the *wheezling* ; but you are happily free from the worst symptoms of my malady—the constant expectoration and occasional vomiting of blood. Under any circumstances, it becomes us to be resigned, but both of us have still left many blessings for which to be thankful. Our bodily sufferings are not extreme, and our mental faculties are not impaired.

"The Hymns are a treasure to me. Independently of their sacred character, they appear to me to possess poetical merit of as high an order as any compositions of that kind I have met with They shall forthwith make the round of the family, all of whom, I make no doubt, will read them with the same delight as myself. I must endeavour to preserve them for my little Mary, and should I die before she is able to use them, shall consider them one of the most valuable legacies I could leave her. May God promote their usefulness to all the young minds to which they are or may become familiar.

* * * * * *

"I do not wish, my dear uncle, to tire you with my letters, or to burden you with answering them; but should like to hear in a line or two now and then, when your convenience suits, and if God spare me, how you continue in health. As for myself, I am in much the same way as when I last wrote, except that for ten days the cough has been rather worse. The doctor, who was here yesterday, does not pretend to discover any symptom more favourable than usual, unless it be that he thinks my looks not so desponding as they have sometimes been.

"I re-enclose Mr. Rose's letter, and hope no accident will befal it ere it reach you.

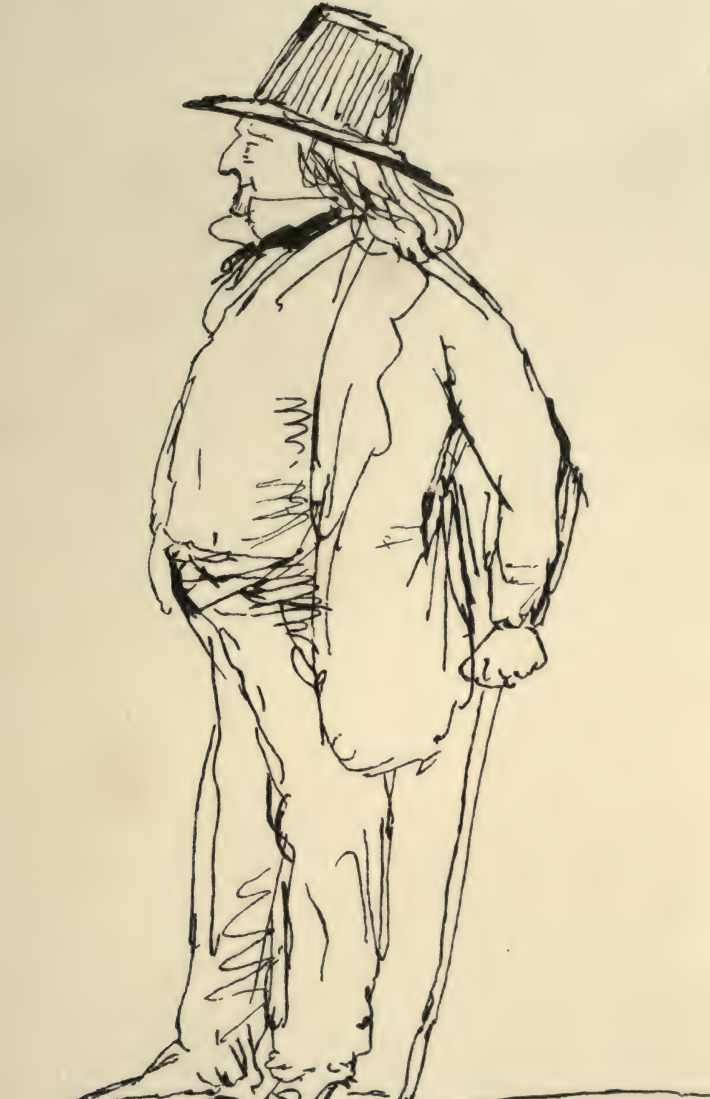
"With kindest love to Mrs. Hogg and all the little ones, I am,

"Dear Sir,
"Your affectionate Nephew,
"R. Hogg."

At the time this letter was penned, the writer was in consumption, and died in 1834. His uncle, in whose steps as a poet he had bid fair to tread, attended his funeral in the churchyard of Broughton, in Peeblesshire. This was the last occasion on which he met his brother's family.

The stalwart frame was beginning to give way; Mrs. Hogg was anxious, and sent now and then for Dr. Anderson from Selkirk; but the Poet himself made little complaint, and kept steadily at work, preparing articles for *Fraser's Magazine* and other periodicals.

In April of 1835 he was in Edinburgh, and one still living can recall how he accompanied him from Gloucester Place, the residence of Professor Wilson, up to town, past the Queen Street Gardens, along George Street, and thence to the North Bridge. The Professor with two of his daughters convoyed the Shepherd, while his son and another walked on in front. Probably many a head was turned as the stately, picturesque figure of Christopher North, with his flowing yellow locks and broad turned-over collar, passed along. Some, too, would say, "And that's the Ettrick Shepherd." James



JOHN WILSON.

(1850.)

Hogg had once borne himself erect, and his step had been agile and light, and his figure had been familiar on Edinburgh streets for twenty years; but the bard of the "Queen's Wake" was now past threescore, and there were grey hairs where formerly there had been only golden brown. Still he walked with a firm step, pleased, as he no doubt was, with the company of his loved Professor and the two handsome girls who accompanied him. The party separated near the University, and the Ettrick Shepherd was seen no more on Edinburgh streets.

On the 12th of August he went as usual to the moors, and shortly before starting he wrote to a young friend in Edinburgh. The note contains only a few lines, touching the advancement of Mr. Charles Marshall; but as it is the last letter he wrote, we may be excused for quoting it in full.

"Eltrive Lake, Augt. 11, 1835.

"Dear Sir,

I have got an express within this half hour from the Revd. Mr. Aitken for Mr.

Marshall to appear at Minto Manse on the 18th for a fair competitive trial. As I know no direction that can find him save through you, I beseech you to let him know. He has left one of his best shirts, and we know not where to send it.

"In great haste for the moors,

"Yours ever,

"J. H.

"Mr. Shearer, Post Office, Edinr."

Mr. Shearer, who received this little note, writes us as follows :—

"I see, on looking at my note-book, that I went to Eltrive in June, 1835, and met with a very kind reception indeed. I showed Mr. Hogg several pieces of poetry which I had received from various authors for my intended publication, on one of which he made some pencil alteration.

"Next day he, Mr. Marshall, and I went to fish in St. Mary's Loch. The wind was from the east, high and very cold. Mr. Hogg had not fished long till he broke his rod. 'It is surely a salmon,' he exclaimed, 'for he had sic a weight that he would not move after taking the hook, but lay just like a stone at the bottom.'

"Having thus lost his fishing rod he left us and went home. . . . Mr. Marshall and I arrived at Eltrive about 4 o'clock. This was the last time your father fished, so that I was the last who had the honour of fishing with him.

"Sitting together on the sofa" (the old black haircloth sofa, still in possession of the present writer) "he played several fine old Scotch airs on the violin, and regretted much that when he should be no more, a good many of the old Scotch tunes would be lost, as no one could play them now but himself. . . .

"After breakfast next day I left for Edinburgh, Mr. Hogg accompanying me to the Yarrow. There we parted, and I never saw him again."

The poet's only son, and, from infancy, his devoted companion, gives in a letter to the Rev. Dr. Russell, some interesting recollections of these later months of his father's life.

"You may recollect that he was for ten years a Shepherd at Blackhouse, and I think he always looked back on these ten years as the happiest of his life. In the month of July before his death, he asked me to accompany him, one fine day on horseback, up to the heights that separate Douglas Burn from Traquair. I was surprised to see him mount on horseback, for he had not done so for some years previously, but I guessed as we wended our way up Douglas Burn, past the old tower and the farmhouse of Blackhouse, where he had spent so many happy days, that he was taking his last look of them. We rode up to the stones that mark the graves of the seven brethren, alluded to in the old ballad, at the top of the Glen burn;* and he took a long look at all the scenery which had been so familiar to him in days gone by. We then returned home, and I was right in my surmise, for he never saw Blackhouse again.

"The following August he felt pretty well, and he and I went up to Birkhill on the twelfth, he having permission as usual from the Earl of Wemyss to shoot over his property there. My father was stronger and able to take more exercise than I expected on that occasion, and I almost hoped that his life might be spared longer than he anticipated.

"On our return journey to Eltrive we came down between the Lochs and Ettrick. On our way we came to an opening where we got a glimpse of the valley of Ettrick, and that spot where used to stand the house in which he was born, and of the church. He sat down and remained without saying a word for about half an hour. I did not speak to him, for I felt that the thoughts that were passing through his mind, were probably too solemn to be disturbed. He rose, and, without saying a word, we proceeded on our way home." It was his last look of that loved and lovely valley.

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* Rather, the Risp Syke.

In a sketch prefixed to an edition of "The Brownie of Bodsbeck" Mr. Lawrence Anderson tells how he spent a night at Eltrive, a few weeks before the poet's death. "He was in great health and spirits, and his conversation was more of literature and literary men than usual; for having been a Shepherd for many years, he prided himself on belonging to that humble but intelligent class, claiming the headship of the clan, and talked generally more of sheep, and of the shepherd's life than of poets and poetry. He had as guests besides ourselves, Thomas Tod Stoddart and Henry Scott Riddell, both poetical aspirants, and authors of some reputation. . . . . . .

"It was a pleasant sight to see the poet amidst his happy family in his own cottage. You saw the kind husband, the indulgent father, the man of genius, with occasionally much of the serious air of the patriarch. His shrewd observations on men and literature; his stories of pastoral life and strange adventure; his simple and unaffected manners, kindly disposition, and great hospitality delighted the visitor, and made him, while he admired the poet, love the man."

But the Shepherd's health was not good. Notwithstanding that he could pass and enjoy a few social hours with his friends, he suspected that the end was coming on apace. He continued to go to the moors for a week or two, but at last in October he was forced to keep the house. First, the house; then the bed; and then the long, long rest—for the end came on the 21st of November.

His old and tried friend the late Alexander Laidlaw (Bowerhope) thus writes to a correspondent about a month after the sad event :—

"Bowerhope, Decr. 12, 1835.

"Dear Sir,

"I am just now favoured with your friendly letter enclosing the beautiful dirge for my dear and lamented friend Mr. Hogg, for which I thank you. . . .

"I visited him on the 22nd October, and almost daily till the 19th November. After this I was in the room in which he died, never took off my clothes, but rested occasionally on a sofa—never got home till the Saturday after the funeral.

"Mr. Hogg went to the moors with his dog and gun as usual about the latter end of August, but this seems to have been a kind of a last effort to bear up under the progress of his malady. He gradually sank under languor and debility, and by the 20th of October was confined to bed. From this time he was only once out of the room in which he died. About this time he was attacked by severe hiccup, which scarcely left him when awake, till sensation was almost gone. This distressing symptom so harrassed him that he seldom after this could speak freely; but he complained of nothing else, and said if it were not the hiccup he would be quite well, and said 'it was a reproach to the faculty that they could not cure the hiccup.'

"Though he knew he was in imminent danger, he was averse to giving information to his friends. On the 12th I wrote a short note for the *Glasgow Courier*, which was copied into several other newspapers. At this time his ideas were correct, but a lengthened detail seemed too fatiguing for his mind. He spoke none after the morning of the 17th, and at 12 noon on the 21st he ceased to breathe. . . .

"Professor Wilson and his two sons, John and Blair, came from Edinburgh. I introduced Wilson [to the room] while Mrs. Hogg was still kneeling by the coffin previous to its being removed. But, dear sir, these are scenes still so painful, that I cannot think on them without emotion. Professor Wilson and wee Jamie laid the head in the grave, and the attending company seemed to feel deeply when they took the long, the last farewell of their beloved Bard. . . . . . .

"Mr. Hogg and I were in our youthful days almost inseparable companions, and I believe there is none alive to whom *Jamie Hogg* more confidently unbosomed the thoughts of his simple guileless bosom."

Thus died the Shepherd Poet, the Bard of Ettrick, the true son of genius and child of nature, the simple-hearted guileless man, the devoted husband and affectionate father, as loved as he was loving.

His children loved him fervently; his servants loved him, and his friends and associates lamented him. And they buried him on a bleak November day in the green churchyard of Ettrick, not much more than a stone's throw from the lowly cot where he was born. The people from his native vale and from Yarrow, who had known and loved him, buried him and wept at his grave when the cold clay fell on the coffin of the Ettrick Shepherd. His young son wept when they hid his father's coffin from his eyes, and now, a grey-haired man, he mourns him still.

Christopher North reverently uncovered his head, as he stood by the grave, and with his long yellow hair floating in the chill winter breeze, he too wept, because his friend, the simple poet from Ettrick Forest, was laid low.

John Wilson was sincere, we do not doubt, in his love and in his grief, for he was a man loving and large-hearted. His own great sorrow—the death of his wife—happened soon after this, and overborne as he was by that event, his own great loss may have overshadowed the feeling of regret for his friend, or blunted his interest in the sorrowing family of the poet. While, therefore, it may be that something like a lack of interest appeared, it is but just to say that Professor Wilson was ever kind and friendly towards Mrs. Hogg and her family, although by his negligence and unconquerable procrastination the posthumous sale of Hogg's works, on which so much depended, was much injured. But, as we know, more ill is done from want of thought than from want of heart.

Shortly after the death of Hogg, Professor Wilson expressed his willingness to undertake the biography of his friend. Many letters and other papers were put into his hands, along with the only unpublished pieces left by the Ettrick Shepherd. After long delay, the biography not being forthcoming, the publishers, the Messrs. Blackie, of Glasgow, issued the collected works without the memoir promised from the pen of Professor Wilson.

Allan Cunningham had offered to undertake the work, and a thousand pities it was that his offer had not been accepted, especially as all the documents put at the disposal of Wilson were lost or mislaid. The family of James Hogg certainly never recovered them. To them the loss was irreparable.

The following letter from Dr. Crichton, written after the poet's death, has reference to the circumstances above mentioned :—

"16 Dean Terrace,
"29th April, (1836).

"My dear Friend,

"I did not receive your very interesting epistle till after the carrier was gone, and this is generally the case, although we send up early in the morning. . . .

"I do not wonder at your anxiety about what Allan Cunningham wrote you about, who, I daresay would do every justice to the memory of his friend, but I agree with you that you cannot well do anything until you hear what the Professor (Wilson) means to do, as anything coming from his hand would be more likely to take with the public, and I doubt not, should he undertake it, would be equally solicitous to deal gently in all cases where this was necessary.

"I own I should be most anxious that his religious sentiments should appear in their proper light, for he always appeared to me to have a high reverence and respect for the Scriptures and for the ordinances and precepts of our most holy religion, which I am afraid the readers of *Blackwood* are not generally aware of.

"This is not only due to his memory and to his family but to the public, who may have been misled by what was said in the "Noctes," and I cannot but give credit to J. Gray for his anxiety on this head. It shows a very proper feeling in him. . . .

"Hoping to hear good tidings from you, I remain, my dear friend,

"Sincerely and affectionately yours,
"WM. CRICHTON."

Passing from this, we cannot refrain from quoting a passage extracted from a lecture delivered by the late Henry Scott Riddell, one and thirty years after his friend James Hogg had been laid asleep in his lonely grave in the Forest :—

"You will perhaps wonder to hear me assert that it was the simplicity and the single-heartedness—if I may so word it—of his character which rendered it to many so difficult to understand. At least so have I always thought. Men of the world, I mean simply of the every day world, expecting to meet with one who, a poet, was yet in other respects quite of their own cast, could not understand why it should turn out so far otherwise, and much less could they readily comprehend the unassuming simplicity both of manners and language which constituted the cause of anomaly. . . Nothing ever hurt his feelings so much as to hear one man speaking disrespectfully of another. . . I do not think that he was apt to entertain bitter or unrelenting feelings towards any of his fellow kind, and this is how, I suppose, not a few took unwarrantable advantage of his good nature. Yet if dissatisfied with any one he would not scruple to express his sentiments as opportunity might serve. . . He would not seek to alter your opinion, and most likely you would have failed to alter his. There was a deep and earnest stamina of mental firmness in him after all."

Another has said of him—

"As the kind mentor of a household, indulgent perhaps to a fault, he was wont as the Sabbath evening came round to take down the 'big Ha' bible, once his father's pride,' for the worship of God, and to exercise his family and domestics in the Shorter Catechism."

The Shepherd desired to be buried in Ettrick Churchyard, and there he was laid near the spot where rest the remains of Thomas Boston, and side by side with his father and grandfather, "Will of Phaup." A very unpretentious stone was erected at the grave by his widow. When a quarter of a century had passed, some sympathetic souls began to suggest the fitness of raising a monument to the memory of James Hogg. And a monument of stone was duly fashioned, and was placed by St. Mary's Loch, where it stands now overlooking the land he loved. A good monument, well designed, and tastefully executed, occupying a most picturesque situation; but uncompleted and suffering from the bad effects of storm and tempests, and from the worse effects produced by the "defacing fingers" of rude manufacturing mortals from Galashiels and Selkirk.

It is well, however, that the fame of the Ettrick Shepherd does not rest for perpetuity on a monument, but upon a more secure basis. "The Queen's Wake," "Donald M'Donald," "When the Kye comes Hame," and "Auld Ettrick John," will, we trust prove a better memorial of the Shepherd's genius, than one of stone and lime.

Not very long after Hogg's death, Lord Melbourne, then Prime Minister, sent a sum of money to the poet's widow, a gift from the Royal bounty. Having left his affairs in great confusion, his many kind friends began a subscription and raised a handsome fund, which was invested for behoof of Mrs. Hogg and her family. His country remembered him although "Maga," who had owed much of its vitality to his pen, was silent.

Eighteen years after Hogg's death, in 1853, when Mrs. Hogg's heaviest struggles with the world were past, when her family were grown up and educated,—one, alas! married and dead,—then Her Majesty made provision for the later years of the poet's widow. A pension of £50 a year was given to her, which she enjoyed till her death, on November 15th, 1870. And because she had been such a power in her husband's life and home, and because she had lived such a prudent gentle life in her long widowhood of thirty-six years, we quote what was said of her by her pastor, from the pulpit, the Sabbath after her interment:—

Only 3

"Again, after a short interval, we have in the providence of God been called to part with one of our oldest and most respected members. Yet amid the grief which fills the hearts of all who knew her, and especially of those who were most intimately connected with her, let this thought be uppermost in our minds, that we sorrow not as others who have no hope, but as those who have a cheering hope—a blessed assurance of her eternal well-being. For her religion was no empty formalism, no unreal profession, or vague conjecture. To her, religion was a real, definite, well-grounded conviction. Her faith in Christ was direct, earnest, assured, and withal combined with genuine humility and meekness.

"This is not the occasion to describe how she adorned the home of a husband who has won a place in the first rank of our national poets, and whose master-pieces are in the main characterized by purity and elevation of sentiment, by fascination of thought, and by sweetness of expression. Nor can we dwell here upon the galaxy of genius and learning which was in those days attracted to that dwelling. His memory is preserved in the imperishable annals of a nation which tardily learned to be proud of him, as he in turn was ever proud of the gentle and devoted sharer of his joys and sorrows. It is on the latter part of her remarkable life that I would dwell, the period of her long widowhood of five-and-thirty-years. Meekly acquiescing in the stroke of her Father-God, which removed her earthly protector, she retired into seclusion, and there devoted herself to the two-fold task of training her children—the youngest then a mere infant—for this life, and herself and them for the life to come. She might have commanded a wider sphere of society, but, like the Shunamite who 'dwelt among her own people,' she preferred the narrower circle of life and duty, which secured greater and more lasting usefulness. And so in this she reaped the fruit of self-denying labours, that in her last illness she enjoyed the grateful filial attentions of those, to whose interests, temporal and eternal, her long widowhood had been consecrated."

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THE END.

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